

"THE QUEEN OF FAIRY DELL"
AND OTHER TALES
BY MARIA



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NOTICE TO MARINERS.

(No. 2, 1912.)

NEWFOUNDLAND

Little Burin Island, { Western Side of Placentia Bay.

Latitude 46° 59' 00" N } approx.
Longitude 55° 11' 00" W }

Notice is hereby given that a diaphone Fog Alarm, operated by air compressed by oil engine has been installed in a flat-roofed building erected on the South Eastern side of Little Burin Island. It will be put in operation on July 1st proximo, sounding during thick and foggy weather, one blast of 4 seconds duration in every 88 seconds, thus:

BLAST	Silent	BLAST	Silent
4 secs.	84 secs.	4 secs.	84 secs.

The Station consists of a flat-roofed Dwelling, flat-roofed Engine House and Store House, all to be painted Black and White Horizontal bands.

A. W. PICCOTT.

Minister of Marine and Fisheries.

Department of Marine and Fisheries,
St. John's, Newfoundland, June 10th, 1912.



NOTICE TO MARINERS.

(No. 3, 1912.)

NEWFOUNDLAND.

Tides Point, { Western Side of Placentia Bay.

Latitude 47° 04' 00" N } approx.
Longitude 55° 06' 00" W }

Notice is hereby given that a diaphone Fog Alarm, operated by air compressed by Oil Engine has been installed in a flat roofed Building erected on Tides Point. It will be put in operation on August 1st proximo giving during thick or foggy weather two blasts of two seconds duration each in every 90 seconds thus:

BLAST	Silent	BLAST	Silent
2 secs.	5 secs.	2 sec.	81 secs.

The Station, Comprises, Keepers Dwelling, Engine House, Store House, all to be painted Red and White, Vertical stripes.

A. W. PICCOTT.

Minister of Marine and Fisheries.

Department Marine and Fisheries,
St. John's, Newfoundland, July 2nd 1912.

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of the householder.



Newfoundland Postal Telegraph Service

POSTAL TELEGRAPH OFFICES are operated throughout the Colony at all the principal places. Messages of ten words, not including address or signature, are forwarded for TWENTY CENTS, and two cents for each additional word.

A Government cable to Canso, Cape Breton, connects with the Commercial Cable Company's system to all parts of the world. There is no more efficient telegraph service in existence.

A ten word message to Canada, exclusive of signature and address, costs from 85 cents to \$1.00.

A ten word message to the United States, exclusive of signature and address, costs from \$1.00 to \$1.50.

To Great Britain, France or Germany, 25 cents per word.

Telegrams are transmitted by means of the Wireless Service during the summer season, and all the year round to steamers equipped with the wireless apparatus, which are due to pass within the radius of each wireless station at Cape Race and Cape Ray.

LETTERGRAMS.

Night Lettergrams are Messages not exceeding fifty words that may be transmitted during the night while the offices are closed for regular business, and are sent at the same rate as ten words in the daytime.

Night Lettergrams are accepted by the Commercial Cable Company, or any of the Newfoundland Cable connections in the United States to all Postal Telegraph Offices in Newfoundland. They must be in plain English, Code or Cipher words not being permitted.

Telegraph forms may be obtained at all Post Offices and from Mail Clerks on Trains and Steamers, and if the sender wishes the messages may be left with the P.M. to be forwarded by first mail to the nearest Telegraph Office free of postage.

H. J. B. WOODS,
Postmaster-General.

December 1st, 1911.

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Public Notice.

COPPER SMELTING ACT

To encourage the smelting of Copper Ore in this Colony, smelters and machinery in connection therewith, also coke for smelting purposes, are admitted free of duty.

BOUNTY

The following bounty is payable on all Copper Ore mined and smelted in this Colony:

\$1.00 per ton up to 100 tons,

.50 per ton from 100 and up to 500 tons,

from one mining location in any one year.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF WOOLEN MANUFACTURES

A Premium of 5 per cent. is payable on the original cost of all wool imported into this colony for the purpose of being manufactured into wearing apparel, blankets, rugs, carpets, or other like manufactures, and upon all wool raised in the Colony and manufactured into the above mentioned articles in factories or buildings where more than 10 persons are annually employed.

All machinery in connection with the above industry to be admitted free of duty.

Copies of the above Acts giving all particulars may be obtained from the Department of Agriculture and Mines.

SYDNEY D. BLANDFORD,
Minister of Agriculture and Mines.

November 16th, 1911.

"The Queen of Fairy Dell"

And Other Tales

BY

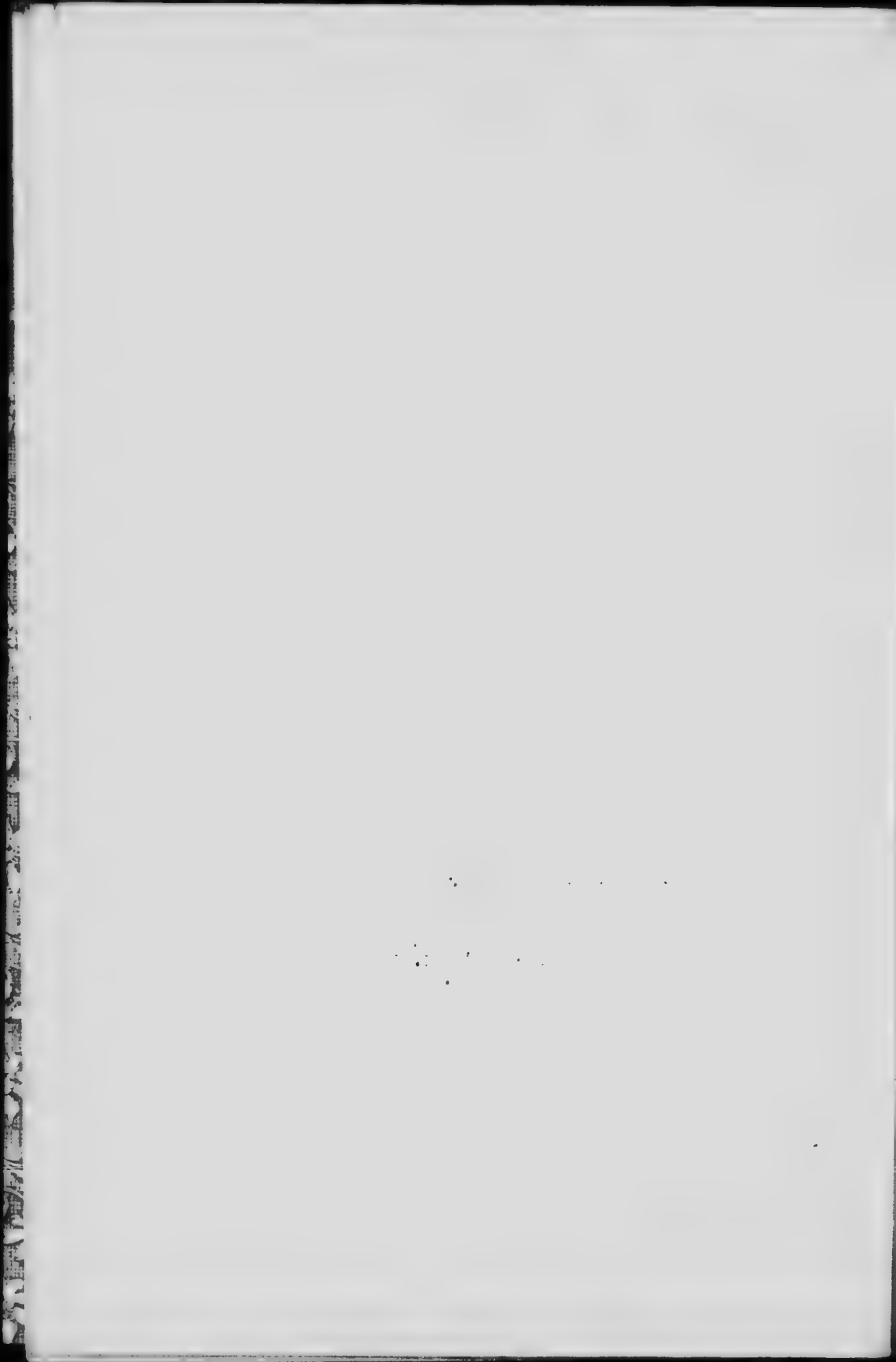
MARIA

*Author of "Only a Fisherman's Daughter," "Faithless,"
"Alice Lester," etc.*

Price: \$1.00

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1912



The Queen of Fairy Bell.

CHAPTER I.

THE VILLAGE BELLE.

IT WAS a dreary aspect upon which they gazed, the young man and maiden, as they stood, hand in hand, waiting for the rest of the pleasure seekers who were some distance behind. Not that the presence of the gay, young village lads and lassies would add to the enjoyment of the two in question, for, it was a case of two is company, etc., with them, but, the path they were traversing was attended with a certain amount of danger, and, it behoved them to be careful. Where could a better leader be found than Fred Daley, to guide them o'er the icy bridge, and where a more fitting sweetheart for Fred than Kathleen Doyle? He, tall, stalwart, handsome and brave, with light hair and moustache, blue eyes, as soft looking and kind as a woman's; she, tall also, with a bright, bewitching face, roguish black eyes, and thick masses of black curls clinging to her small, round head.

She was possessed of more than the ordinary share of beauty, and had she been born to a different sphere of life, and moved in, what is called, good society, she would have graced and ornamented it; her praises would have been sung by the poet, her beauty painted by the artist, and she would have had the world at her feet. But, happy, saucy, innocent, Kathleen was one of those roses which are born to blush unseen, not wasting her sweetness on the desert air, tho' for was she not the light of her father's heart, the sunshine of his home, was she not the idol of the good, true man who hoped one day to call her his. Did she not raise the spirits

and gladden the hearts of all with whom she came in contact, those simple village folk had not enough spare time to devote any to the study of beauty, the delicate mould of features, the lustre of the large black eye, and perfect shape of the face, the arched and finely penciled eyebrows, were not taken in detail, "a comely face that girl Kathleen Doyle has," a rough fisherman would say, as she passed by with a bright smile and a nod, "yes," a comrade would answer "she is a handsome lass, no doubt, but, I don't take much stock in black eyes myself, seems to me there is not much good in them." To these remarks an answer would come to this effect, "Begorra, I see nothing in poor Kathleen's, excepting the fun and merriment that is always peeping out of them."

There had been fun and merriment in them all day up to now, but, as she gazed upon that vast icefield an intense longing took possession of her to walk on, and on, till she could come to some land beyond, something new, new scenes, new faces. For the first time the sameness and unchangeableness of her life seemed to pall upon her, and snatching her hand from Fred's, she stretched both forth, saying, "Oh, Fred, if we could only go, go, go, over the ice and far away. I feel just as if I could walk on forever."

"I think you will be glad enough to rest when you have walked as far as our destination, Kathleen, it's no light journey that's before us, I can tell you."

"I shall prove equal to it never fear," she answered, the momentary longing passing as quickly as it had come, and her old brightness returning.

It was a sea-girt village on the Newfoundland coast, which, we shall call, Good-view Bay, and the time of the year early in the month of March, the day Shrove Tuesday, or, commonly called, Pancake Day. It had come unusually late this year, and for a few days previous a big gale of wind had blown the heavy, northern ice, into the harbour. It was jammed in close to the land-wash and away up into the great arms, where is met the local ice which had formed during the severe frost of that winter. It could now be crossed with perfect safety by anyone familiar with the harbour. Away up to the extreme end of one of those arms nestled, in a small valley called "Fairy Dell," about a dozen houses, and in one of these lived Kathleen's uncle and aunt, and a small army of cousins, both boys and girls. For years back it had been

the custom for Mrs. Doyle to give a large party on Pancake Night, and thither were bent the steps of a goodly portion of the boys and girls of the village. In mild weather, when the arms of the harbour were open, they went up in skiffs or dories. There was, also, a road to Fairy Dell, but by crossing on the ice they shortened the distance a great deal, besides participating in the keen enjoyment of novelty, and the bit of spicy flavour, which a slight amount of danger always lends to the pleasures of youth. Well, the view was, certainly, a dreary one from its sameness alone; the shining ice, the snow-clad hills, the whitened sky. From horizon to horizon was white, all white! no, not all white, two dark objects rising from the centre of the immense harbour met their gaze. One was an ocean steamer crossing the Atlantic bound for Liverpool, the other a big strong barque, going the same direction on its way to Bristol, England. Both had run into Goodview Harbour to escape the ice, and had been caught and held prisoners there, tightly locked in its icy embrace.

"What slow coaches they are," said Kathleen. "Why can they not keep up with us?"

"The boys could of course," answered Fred, "but they have to wait for the ladies, there is not one of them as fleet-footed as my little Kathleen."

"You will persist in calling me your," she answered, with a couquettish smile; "but mind, I warned you not to make too sure. I will not engage myself till my nineteenth birthday, and until that comes you cannot count on me."

"Do not say that, Kathleen. I believe you mean to say yes to me all the time. You are only trying to tease me."

"No, Fred, I am only trying to prepare you for the worse."

"If by the worse you mean to say no, its useless trying to prepare me for it. I could never be prepared for such a blow as that would be to me, Kathleen."

"What would you do?" she asked.

"How can I tell what I would do?" he answered. "I know my heart would be broken, and it would not matter. Something desperate perhaps."

"Not at all, you would soon find some other girl better than I am to console you. Perhaps I may run away with that handsome young Englishman on board the steamer. By the way, I heard he is to be at the party to-night. He, with

some more of his friends, walked as far as Aunt Doyle's on the ice the other day and she invited them."

"Who told you this, and how do you know he is handsome?"

"Two questions at one time, well I will answer them. Fannie Brien was speaking to me yesterday and told me that her brother had just come from Fairy Dell and that Aunt had said to him, 'tell the girls to put on their best bib and tucker for Shrove Tuesday night, we are going to have the handsome young fellow from the steamer here, and perhaps some of his chums too.' But it is not only from hearsay that I know he is handsome, I have met him, now what do you think of that?"

"Met him," echoed Fred. "Where did you meet him, Kathleen?"

"I was down the harbour with father last week, and we went into the magistrate's house, and this young fellow was there; the magistrate's wife introduced us. I took a great fancy to him, but father was as stiff as starch, merely bowed to him, and got me out of the house in a hurry, but I have seen him there again since, his name is Charles Radford."

"You even know his christian name," said Fred. "The magistrate's wife should have known better than to have introduced you and I should think your Aunt Doyle ought to have more common sense, than to invite the like of them to her home, and if he is there you must not dance with him."

"Must not," echoed Kathleen. "I hope you are beginning in time to boss me; you have no right to prevent me from enjoying myself. I certainly shall dance with him if he asks me, and I feel pretty sure he will, too," tossing her head with an air of conscious power.

A grave troubled expression stole over the face of the young man, as he answered, "I have no desire to shorten one moment of your enjoyment, Kathleen; of course, I acknowledge I have no right to interfere, only I hate the thought of your dancing with any of those fellows, they are not our sort and we know nothing about them."

"Oh, nonsense, Fred, you're too narrow-minded, but there, I am only teasing you," slipping her hand into his. "Of course, I don't mean to promise not to dance with Mr. Charles Radford, but why should you mind, he is only here to-day, and gone to-morrow, and we shall never see him again?"

The sound of merry voices and laughter greeted them from behind and they were no longer alone. A joyous group it was that arrived at Mrs Doyle's about an hour later; they were met and surrounded by Kathleen's cousins, a swarm of rosy cheeked girls and boys; hats and wraps were soon removed, and they were seated round the wood fire in the large spacious kitchen, whilst each was presented with a cup of tea which was hot, strong, and sweet, home-made buns, and a generous supply of fresh butter of Aunt Doyle's expert churning. When they had been sufficiently warmed after their icy journey, the men portion of the Doyle family took their male visitors off to the stable to pass their opinion upon the merits of the young fole, and immediately Mrs. Doyle was surrounded by the females and plied with innumerable questions. She was a neat looking, jolly-faced dame of about forty, and just as full of romance, fun and sentiment, as a young girl. Her greatest fault was, that she often allowed her love of merriment and romance to over-rule her prudence and good judgment.

"Oh, Mrs. Doyle, do tell us the news," came in a chorus. "Are we to have some of those young gentlemen to our dance to-night?"

"Yes, my dears," she answered, "but for goodness sake don't tell John," (meaning her husband) "he would be mad if he knew I had asked them, so if they come he must think they have only dropped along by chance, as they did the other day."

"If they come," echoed a bright-eyed girl of sixteen. "Why, Mrs Doyle, is there a doubt of their coming?" "They seemed to have no doubt on the matter then," answered her hostess. "But, perhaps they may not fancy such a walk; it's only born Newfoundlanders, like yourselves, who would find amusement in a two mile journey across ice."

"Yes," answered Kathleen, "I dare say they are only namby pambies; well, what matter, we can enjoy ourselves without them."

"That's true, Kathleen," chimed in another; "and perhaps they would only be having their fun at us afterwards."

"Well, if you expect them to have fun at your expense, Fannie, I don't expect them to have any at mine, I am looking forward to having all the fun myself," answered Kathleen.

Tea hour soon arrived, the table was set in the cozy little parlour, and the young folks seated around when a knock was heard at the door. Mrs. Doyle started, but tried to look unconcerned, each girl began to flutter, in spite of herself, with excitement. The servant maid had received her instructions, the parlour door was opened and three young gentlemen entered the room. O'er the face of John Doyle passed a shade of annoyance, but being of an hospitable disposition he cordially welcomed the strangers and asked them to be seated at his table, which invitation they thankfully accepted.

On the heart of Fred Daley fell a weight of lead, and a vague, terrible feeling of coming sorrow, took possession of him. When Charles Radford was presented to him, and their eyes met, he felt he could hate him then and there. Judging from the face, Charles Radford's did not seem like one to inspire hatred, it looked an honest one, besides being remarkably handsome. He was the typical Englishman, fair complexion, laughing blue eyes, blonde hair and moustache, he looked his age, which was barely twenty-one.

Fred, however, fought against the feeling, and tried to enter into the spirit of the hour. Charles Radford managed, with the unobserved help of Mrs. Doyle, to get near Kathleen, to whom he said, in a low voice:

"What a lucky mortal I am, to be seated near the queen of 'Fairy Dell.'"

"Meaning me," answered Kathleen, not affecting to misunderstand him. "Well, the queen does not know whether she has received a compliment or not, so she holds her thanks in reserve."

The table was laden with good things, such as roast veal, roast fowl, all kinds of cake, cream, and preserves, and delicious tea. At the end of the repast a large dish of pancakes was brought in and then the fun commenced. Put into the pancake batter were a large button, a shilling and a wedding ring. Whoever got the money, so the superstition ran, was supposed to be a rich man or woman before the year was out; the happy individual who received the pancake with the ring, was sure to be married during the year; and the unlucky man or maid to whose lot fell the button, was destined to live in single blessedness all the days of their lives. With such a forlorn prospect in view there was no one desirous of

receiving on their plate a pancake containing the obnoxious button, so there was much digging of knives into the cakes placed on each plate, before the owners attempted to put a tooth through them, and if a flat, hard substance was struck, which seemed more like a button than a shilling, the owner tried to, adroitly, slip it off to his neighbour's plate, which elicited much fun if they were discovered in the act.

To Kathleen's lot fell the pancake containing the ring; it was her aunt's wedding ring, of good thick gold, and seemed nothing the worse for being twenty years in wear.

"You must wear it for a month, Kathleen," cried Fannie Brien, "or the luck will go." Mrs. Doyle had a very slim hand, and when Kathleen, laughingly, slipped the ring upon her own finger, it looked as tho' it were made for her.

Fred Daly got the button, but not being in much humor for fun, he put it quietly into his pocket, and no one was the wiser.

To Kathleen, also, fell the shilling.

"The gods mean to be kind to you, Miss Kathleen," said Charles Radford. "If the superstition proves correct you will have a husband and a fortune within the year."

"And I don't care two straws for either," she answered.

"What! not for a fortune ever?"

"No, I don't see what I should do with it, in this place anyway. I have all I want, and I feel quite happy without a husband."

In a questioning tone, "You have never been in love, then?"

"Have I not?" also in a questioning tone.

"No one here to suit your fancy?" he went on, taking in all in a sweeping glance.

"Not *one single one*," she answered.

She seemed a bit of a puzzle to him, this simple, village girl. In the rear of the house was a large room, which had been cleared out for dancing, and the strains of a violin, reached their ears, an old man had been secured to give them dance music for the night.

"May I have the first dance with the queen of Fairy Dell?" said Charles Radford, bowing before her.

"No, you may not," answered Kathleen; "someone has that pleasure secured since yesterday." Just then Fred Daley came along, and without any ceremony, led her off. Charles

made Fannie Brien happy, by asking her to be his partner, and if the soul of the old violin was not awakened by a master hand, it was certainly enough to stir the pulse, and set the heart beating with pleasure, as their eager feet tripped the light fantastic till early morn.

A simple, village party, but ah, how long its memory remained in the hearts of some present, and what sadness and bitterness, that memory brought.

The second dance was a cotillion, and Charles Radford again sought the "extreme pleasure" of dancing it with Kathleen.

"Too late again," she answered, laughing merrily. She had just promised the dance to one of her cousins.

"I am unfortunate," he replied. "Will you tell me what dance you are not engaged for?"

"I am free for the next quadrille, so far," she answered.

"Then, will you do me the honor to dance it with me, you 'will-o-the-wisp'?"

"I will, yes." So he went and danced the cotillion with his hostess, and completely won that lady with his charming, frank, courteous manners, and when Fred Daly sought Kathleen for the next quadrille, she told him she had promised it to Mr. Radford.

"That fellow has any amount of cheek. I thought, Kathleen, that you would have refused to dance with him."

"And why," asked Kathleen, opening her big black eyes in wonder. "This is the third time he has asked me, I was engaged for the other two or I would have danced with him."

"Well, I have no right to interfere, I suppose, as we are not formally engaged."

"I should not recognize your right if we were," she answered, spiritedly. Charles Radford then came along, and with a nod and smile at Fred, Kathleen took his arm and joined the dance. Fred put on his overcoat and hat, and went out into the open air. Do what he would he could not shake off the heavy weight of woe which oppressed him. As he was going towards the door, one of his friends, named Will Baker, said, "hold on, Fred, I think I will go and take an airing too."

Fred was in no humor for company at that time, and passing quickly he muttered something which sounded like "I am not coming back again." Will repeated this to someone.

who told Mrs. Doyle, and by the time it reached Kathleen's ears it was converted into, that "Fred Daly had told Will Baker that he was going home and did not intend to return."

Kathleen was indignant and put him down for a selfish tyrant. "He knows I care for him, and he wants to have the satisfaction of spoiling my night's pleasure," she told herself. "But I will let him see that he won't do that; I will dance with handsome Charles for the rest of the night, and have him see me home too, there will be plenty glad to tell him of it to-morrow."

It was a bright beautiful night and Fred walked up and down the narrow road for nearly an hour, then quietly and unobserved by anyone, entered the house by the back door. He crept upstairs to one of the boy's rooms and threw himself into a chair. "I cannot bear to go in and see her dancing with that upstart," he said to himself. "I'll stay here until our next dance comes on, that will be the last one, what will she care, she won't miss me."

There was silence for a while, then, someone began to sing in a beautiful, clear, tenor voice, and he knew that the singer was Charles Radford. The song told of a lover who returned home after years of absence, to find that the sweetheart of his youth had died; the words of the chorus reached him distinctly:

"Where is Kathleen, sweetest Kathleen,
She who was ever my heart's fondest queen;
Oh! give me the sweetheart I loved in my boyhood—
I hear but the echo, Oh! where is Kathleen?"

There were a few more songs, and then the strains of "Sir Roger De Coverly" struck up. He went downstairs to find Kathleen standing, hand in hand with Chas. Radford, ready for the dance. Sick at heart Fred turned away. She had given away his dance; he went out again intending to wait and join Kathleen, as she left the house. He heard her merry laughter, and, from the light, which streamed into the passage way, he could see the glowing cheeks of rosy red, the sparkling eyes, which shone like stars, a crimson, woolen scarf was wound round her small head and neck. Standing, by her side, was his rival, gazing spell-bound into her face, he was dazzled by the girl's rare beauty. To-night, the work which had begun a few days previous, was finished; his heart was

captivated, taken by storm, without any effort on her part, by this simple, village maiden, and he firmly resolved, that, if it were possible, he would win her for his own. Fred was about to step forward to claim the privilege of accompanying her when he stopped short, perhaps, he thought, she would only tell me as she did before, "that I have no right to interfere," and, with a heavy heart, he took the road homeward; a long, solitary journey of four miles.

"Who is to be our pilot, now," they asked. There's no one who can do it as well as Fred Daly."

"What happened him, Kathleen?" asked Fannie Brien. "Why did he go home so early?"

"How should I know," she answered. "I'm not his keeper."

"You had better beware, Charlie," whispered one of his companions. "Don't you know you are arousing the jealousy of Miss Doyle's sweetheart?"

"Mind your own business, Hal," retorted Charles, in a low voice.

"I think you had better go on with your friends to the ship, if you come with us you will have a long, lonely, icy walk, afterwards," said Kathleen.

"What matter what I have afterwards," he replied. "The happiness of his hour will repay me."

The moon was at its full, and the glistening ice lent an added brightness to the night; the Aurora Borealis were dancing too and fro in the northern sky; stars were shooting, and perfect stillness reigned supreme. The two ships gleamed in the distance like black spectres, with the snowy hills, and dazzling ice, for a background. It was as perfect and beautiful a scene as an ice bound bay is capable of presenting on a moonlight night. This young Englishman had the gift of conversation. He won Kathleen to talk of her home life, her tastes, her longings, how, at times, the keen desire to visit lands beyond the seas took possession of her. He dared not yet speak of his own longings. He knew that if he was to win this village belle he must have patience, he might spoil all by speaking too soon. He left Kathleen with some of her friends at her own door, after winning from her, a half promise, that she would visit Mrs Dalton, the magistrate's wife, next evening.

CHAPTER II.

WHERE IS KATHLEEN?

MR. DOYLE, Kathleen's father, had taught school for many years at Goodview Bay; he was a well learned man, as far as sound, English education went. His wife died when his little daughter was but three years old, and then all the love of his heart was lavished upon her; he could not bear her out of his sight. He attended himself to her education, and, being remarkably bright and quick, she soon learned all that he could teach her. Mr. Doyle had means enough to give his daughter the advantage of a few years in the city school, but he could not endure the thought of parting with her. Selfish, certainly, but he found excuses for himself; he marked the girl's exceeding beauty, and felt he was justified in not trusting her amidst the snares of city life without his constant, watchful protection. So that Kathleen, knowing Grammar and Geography by heart, and having a good accent, was altogether ignorant of those accomplishments which would fit her for the wife of a man who moved in the society to which Charles Radford belonged. Fred Daly, was the son of Timothy Daly, whose grandfather had been born, had lived and died at Goodview Bay. They had ample means, making their money in the good times, which we all hear so much of, when the fish was plentiful. After passing through Mr Doyle's school Fred was sent to a college in St. John's, where he spent three years, and then returned to Goodview Bay, to manage the supply business which his father carried on. Kathleen's father, knowing the sterling qualities of which Fred was possessed, and seeing that his daughter would be well provided for in a worldly sense, felt gratified and relieved, when Fred spoke to him of his affections.

Kathleen had always done as she pleased, not that she ever pleased to do anything very much out of the way. It was only to roam about at will, to speak and act as she liked, to settle household affairs as she thought best; when the

humour took her, she would shoulder the trouting basket and rod and go off for some hours fishing, at other times she would take a dory and row herself across the harbor to visit her aunt, and so, when for some whim, she refused to be formally engaged, tho' confessing her love for Fred, till she was nineteen, her father only smiled, and said, "Well, she is too young to be married for some years yet, what matter so that you are true to each other."

Next morning, at breakfast, Kathleen chatted away to her father of last night's fun. She told him of the presence of the young gentleman from the steamer, omitting, however, Charles Radford's attention to herself, and Fred's desertion of her on that account. That evening found her on her way to Mr Dalton's. Her conscience accused her of doing wrong, but, she told herself, she "was only paying Fred back in his own coin," and he, thinking that surely Kathleen would be home for tea, accepted Mr. Doyle's invitation to remain. He was doomed to be disappointed, after waiting past the hour they were obliged to sit down without her. Mr. Doyle questioned the servant maid who expressed the opinion, that Miss Kathleen had gone to her aunt's. Fred, longing, so intensely for a sight of her, and wishing so ardently to be again at peace with her, as soon as tea was over, started off for Fairy Dell, but only to meet with another disappointment. When Kathleen arrived home a few hours later, and her father told her where Fred had gone, she told him that "Fred was only a blundering idiot, or he would have gone first to Mrs. Dalton's to see if she was there." Next morning, Kathleen did go to her aunts, not alone tho', and Fred missed her again. It was four days after the party when they next met, and then Kathleen's manner was cold and distant, and Fred left her almost in despair. Her father only smiled, "Merely a lover's quarrel," he thought, "which will blow over in a few days."

Mr. Doyle was an old man, having married late in life; he seldom went out of doors and consequently nearly every one in Goodview Bay, but himself, knew of the attention of the handsome young stranger to the village belle, Kathleen Doyle. Once, after being some days without seeing her, Charles Radford went boldly to her house, but he was received with such cold, and marked disapproval by Kathleen's father, that he knew it would be worse than useless to ask

him to sanction his attentions to his daughter. Kathleen knew it also. They contrived to meet outside on every, possible occasion. Thus, three weeks had passed since the night of the Pancake party. During all this time Kathleen kept up a cold reserve towards Fred Daly, whose honest heart was almost broken at the unkind, unmerited treatment. For the past week or so a change had come over her, she had grown thinner, the roses had faded somewhat from her cheeks, her manner was nervous and excited. Each evening, a few minutes after Fred's arrival, she retired for the night, saying that she did not feel well. Once, Fred was tempted to speak to Mr. Doyle of Charles Radford's attentions to his daughter, but then, he thought that Kathleen would be angry with him, and any day a friendly gale might come and blow off the ice, and he would be gone forever from their lives. Next day the friendly gale came. It was wonderful with what rapidity the ice was going, letting the sunshine once more play upon the sparkling waters. With a feeling of joy and thanksgiving in his heart, Fred Daly watched it. The heavy cloud which had dimmed the sunshine of their love would soon be dispersed, and they would be all in all to each other again. He did not doubt Kathleen's love, he blamed himself for keeping away from her that night of the party, and believed she was resenting it ever since. "Of course," he thought, "but for the attention of Charles Radford she would not have kept it up so long."

It was on a Sunday afternoon, and he went to pay his usual visit to Kathleen, only to find she had gone out, no one knew where.

"I cannot understand Kathleen, lately," Mr. Doyle said to Fred. "She seems to be worried about something. I suppose the estrangement, which seems to have arisen between you of late must be the cause. Why don't you try and make it up with her Fred; as a rule, I don't believe in interfering between lovers. Kathleen is a bit proud, but she has the softest little heart in the world."

"I would do so, gladly, Mr Doyle," the young man answered, "if she would only give me a chance, but she constantly avoids me. I cannot get ten minutes conversation with her."

"When she bade me good-by awhile ago," said the old man, "there were tears in her eyes, and she kissed me two or three times, a thing she is not in the habit of doing. I

asked her where she was going and she answered that 'she scarcely knew, but that, perhaps, she would soon return.'

The evening passed and Kathleen did not come.

"She must have gone to her aunts," said Mr. Doyle.

"If she is not here by tea time I will go over," said Fred trying to rouse himself, and throw off the heavy burden of trouble which seemed to weigh him down.

Mr. Doyle walked wearily across the floor and looked out of the window.

"Ah, I see the steamer has gone off at last," he said; "she is passing the bay."

"Thank heaven," said Fred, so fervently, that the old man turned and looked at him sharply.

"Why do you say that?" he asked.

"Because," answered Fred, "I fear that handsome young English fellow, Radford, was beginning to win my Kathleen's affections from me. He has contrived to see her very often and paid her marked attention. But please, Mr. Doyle, do not speak of this to Kathleen. He has gone now, and the cloud will pass; it is the first since we confessed our love for each other."

"I wish I had known this sooner," the old man answered. "He came here one day, and I am glad that I treated him very coldly." There was a knock at the door and the servant maid entered with a letter, which she gave to Mr. Doyle.

"Miss Kathleen left this for you, sir," she said.

"When did she give it to you?" he asked.

"Before she went out, sir. She told me to deliver it about tea time."

He took the letter, opened it and read:

DEAR FATHER:

When you receive this letter I shall have left my home. I am going in the steamer with Charles Radford. He belongs to a wealthy English family, and he loves me so well that he is going to make me, a poor village girl his wife, as soon as we reach Liverpool. Do not think badly of me, dear father, for deceiving you, but we knew it would be no use to ask your consent. It is terribly hard on me to leave you and poor Fred too. Ask him to forgive me, if he can. He will easily find a far better girl for his

wife than I am. Good-bye dear father, I hope to see you again some day in the near future. Asking your forgiveness.

I am, as ever,
Your loving daughter

KATHLEEN.

He flung the letter from him, and, putting both hands to his face, cried "lost, ruined, disgraced!" and fell in the chair sobbing as tho' his heart would break. Oh! my Kathleen, my little, innocent Kathleen, why did you not confide all to your father, and let him protect you from that villian? she has gone away and left us, Fred; she is lost to us forever, read," and he pointed to the letter. Fred took it up and read, and when he had finished, a demon had entered his heart, the demon of revenge. His face, distorted with passion, was frightful to behold. He, the man who had, hitherto, been remarked for his patience and gentleness, raised his hand above his head and swore an oath that he would follow and kill the scoundrel who had robbed him of all that was bright, and precious on earth.

"No, no, Fred, my boy," cried the old man; "rash vows are better broken than kept; it is not for you to punish him, his life belongs to God, let Him deal with him."

"I'll follow them, I tell you, Mr. Doyle, till I find them. and then I shall tear her from his arms and kill him."

"Yes, Fred, follow them and bring my Kathleen back to me. Tell her that whatever she has done, or whatever has happened, that her father forgives her, that he cannot live without her, but ah," he went on in a hopeless tone, "What nonsense are we talking, how can you follow them, and even if you did, where in all England would you look for them. No, it's madness, she is lost to us forever!"

Fred took the old man's arm and led him to the window, "I'll tell you how I'll follow them," he said. "Do you see yonder vessel, she is bound for Bristol, England, she will likely get clear to-night, I will secure a passage across in her and once there, I'll find them, and bring Kathleen back to you."

"Heaven speed and help you, my dear boy. A father's prayers and blessings shall follow you, but, Fred, do not stain your hand and your soul with murder."

"I shall kill him, I tell you," were his parting words, and that night he sailed out Goodview Bay Harbour in the large barque bound for Bristol, England.

When Fred Daly landed at Bristol he looked around and wondered what he should do and where he should go. Before leaving Goodview Bay he had quarrelled with his father, who strongly opposed his mad flight, and would allow him only a very limited amount of means. It was now that he realized how small were his chances of finding those whom he sought, where, in that big country should he begin his search? A week passed, a month passed, and then a year. He had gone to London and haunted all the fashionable resorts, he had visited gentlemen's country homes, he had met people bearing the name of Radford, but never the one he wanted. He stood near crowded theatres until he began to be looked upon with suspicion. It was, certainly, a case of looking for a needle in a bundle of straw. When his money ran out he was obliged to give up his search and go to work. This he found hard to get, his appearance was not in his favor. He had acquired a habit of looking round in a restless, uneasy fashion, he had grown thin and haggard, he wore shabby clothes, then, when he earned a certain amount of money, he started off on his search again, which was always fruitless. Thus, five years passed away. At the end of that time he had grown weary of his search, but not of his desire for revenge. He still clung to the idea that he would some day meet him whom he sought. He often thought of his home, and wondered if Kathleen's father still lived or had he died of a broken heart, but, he was determined that he would never return till he had met, and punished his enemy.

Finding it difficult to get employment he, one day, in a fit of desperation, shipped as steward on board a large vessel bound for New York. He expected to return to England in about a month or so, and then he would begin his search anew. It was in the month of June when his ship left Liverpool. They had been about four days sailing when one of those terrific storms, which so often sweep the Atlantic, overtook them. Their vessel became a total wreck and they were obliged to take to the boats. For two days and nights they drifted about at the mercy of the waves, with but a scant supply of food and water.

They had given themselves up for lost, when, at sunset

of the third day, the welcome sight of a curl of smoke against the horizon, gladdened their hearts. It was a large ocean steamer coming their way. Before dark the ship-wrecked crew were on board, clothed and fed. Fred, his constitution being weakened from years of hardship and privation, and constant restless wandering, was unable to bear up against the exposure to wet and cold, which he had endured in the open boat, and he became very ill. The passengers and crew showed much concern at his condition. There was a doctor on board, who attended him, and he was provided with one of the most comfortable berths the ship afforded.

One day as he was lying, half-feverish in his berth, a light knock came at the door. The doctor, who was present, answered it. Fred heard a woman's voice, low and sweet, saying, "how is your patient to-day, doctor," and being told that he was greatly improved, "asked if she might be permitted to see him?" He consented, and she came in and stood looking at Fred. She seemed quite a young girl, with a fair, mild looking face, and an abundance of golden hair. Her eyes were large and blue, and gazed so kindly at him that he was deeply touched.

"I have brought you some fruit," she said. "You will be able to make use of it now, for the doctor says you are on the mending hand."

Fred thanked her and after a few sympathetic remarks she withdrew. She came again next day, and several days afterwards, each time bringing some little delicacy. The steamer was bound for New York, and there were quite a number of tourists on board who decided to get up a concert in aid of the ship-wrecked crew. It was to be held in the saloon. Fred was not well enough to leave his room, but he could hear the concert going on. There were songs, instrumental music, recitations, etc., and then, some one played the introduction to a song. That music set Fred's pulses going, his heart throbbing. What sad, sweet, long forgotten memory, was connected with it? Then the singer commenced. It was a masculine voice, a sweet, powerful tenor. As the song went on Fred sat up, a flush came in his cheek, a light in his eye. The verse finished and the words of the chorus fell distinctly on his ear:

"Dearest Kathleen, sweetest Kathleen,
She who was ever my heart's fondest queen
Oh! give me the sweetheart I loved in my boyhood.
I hear but the echo, Oh! where is Kathleen?"

There was a loud applause, and it was pronounced "the song of the evening." Fred thought deeply, and he placed the scene. In imagination, he found himself in a small, dark bedroom, a feeling of some deep sorrow upon him. The sound of music and dancing reached his ears. Then, he placed the song. He heard it that night, whilst he sat there, and then, he placed the singer. Too well he knew the soft, musical voice. He had found him at last. His patience was rewarded, his long years of seeking over. He sprang up, hastily dressed himself, he was still very weak. One of the stewards entered the room and was surprised to see him up and dressed. "I think I feel well enough to go to the saloon," he explained. "Who is that just singing now?" and he tried to suppress the excitement in his voice.

"Oh, pretty song, is it not? That is the Honourable Charles Radford, he is going for a trip to America."

"Is he alone?" asked Fred.

"No," replied the steward, "his wife accompanies him."

Fred's heart nearly suffocated him.

"His wife," he repeated to himself. "Can it be Kathleen, and if not, is she dead, or worse, he must have deceived her, and if he has, let him beware?" As he made his way to the saloon his mind was in a tumult, should he see that dear, loved face again and know that she was another's, or, was she, like Kathleen of the song, sleeping her last, long sleep where a white, broken column marked her resting-place?

He took a vacant seat and glanced towards the piano. The chorus of the second verse was just finished, and there he stood; the man who had robbed him of his treasure, the man for whom he had sought so long. He was but little changed, a trifle graver, a little more matured, that was all.

"Is Mr Radford's wife there?" asked Fred of one of his companions who sat near him.

"Yes" he answered "She is just getting up from the piano, she has been playing his song for him" and, looking towards her, Fred saw, not the dark, beautiful face, of Kathleen, but the fair sweet one of his kind gentle visitor during his illness,

and he had vowed to take her husband's life. Is it thus he would show his gratitude for her kindness. Oh, unhappy irony of fate. How could he meet him he wondered, when should he get an opportunity to speak to him, to wring from his treacherous lips the story of Kathleen's fate?

The night was fine and warm, and he went out upon the deck and sat down near the door from whence the cabin passengers were coming. After a long wait he saw him come out alone and walk to a lonely part of the ship. Fred walked stealthily up, till he got close behind him, and then he spoke in a stern voice.

"At last, Charles Radford I have found you after five years' search. Had I met you in the first year of my terrible sorrow, I would have taken your life with less mercy than I would show a dog."

The Honorable Charles Radford turned around with a start at the sound of his voice.

"I have not strength to do it now, I am too weakened by illness even if there was no other reason for sparing you, but there is another, for sake of the sweet, gentle lady who is your wife, and at whose hands I have received so much kindness during my illness since I came on board, I would spare you. I left my home over five years ago, the same day that you left it, with murder in my heart. I swore to find you, and take your life, I have been seeking you all this time, and, when I had almost given up the search, when I least expected it, I have found you, and now you shall answer me truthfully, mind. Where is Kathleen Doyle, the girl whose innocence you took advantage of, the girl you persuaded to leave home, father, and friends, and fly with you?"

"Who are you?" Charles Radford asked in a quiet tone.

"I am the man from whom you robbed her," answered Fred, "and I have sworn to avenge her, if you have wronged her, and if you made her your wife she must be dead, as you call another woman by that name now" and his voice almost broke into a sob.

"You say," answered Charles Radford, "that you left home the same day I did. So you must have, for had you remained one day longer you would have known that Kathleen Doyle did not remain more than one hour on board the steamer. She threw me over. jilted me at the last moment. She managed to

get ashore and was, doubtless, safe, and sound, in her father's home that same night."

The rush of joy that went through Fred's heart was almost too much for him and he caught the deck-rail. "You are not trifling with me, you are not deceiving me," asked Fred scarcely believing what he had heard.

"As Heaven is above us" answered Charles Radford I speak the truth. Had she remained we would have been married as soon as we reached Liverpool, but I have only myself to blame for losing her, I was young and thoughtless, and in my eagerness to secure her, I over-reached myself, but," he asked, breaking off suddenly, "have you had no letters from your friends since you left home, surely they could tell you?"

"No!" Fred replied, "My mother is dead, and I quarrelled with my father the day I left, and I told Mr Doyle that he would never hear from me till I had news of Kathleen."

"And so by your flight and desire for revenge upon me you have lost your chance of happiness, for doubtless she has blessed some other lucky man ere this. I could not tell you what I suffered in that hour when I found I had lost her. Well! perhaps it is better that I did lose her, I may not have been able to make her happy. Her surroundings would have been entirely different from those which she had been accustomed to, but her memory shall live in my heart till I die."

"Oh! would that I could fly to her," said Fred as he bitterly reproached himself for the years he had wasted.

"There is my wife," said Charles Radford. "she knows nothing of that episode in my life."

"I understand," Fred replied, and he went below to his berth

CHAPTER III.

THE WEDDING RING.

And what of Kathleen, was it love for the handsome young stranger, who had so unfortunately come into her life, which had induced her to take such a step. Not by any means, for her heart belonged to the man whom she had so cruelly wronged. She was as innocent of the world and its ways as a baby.

The novelty, love of adventure, and the romance which hung around their stolen meetings, lent such a glamour to the whole proceeding that she mistook it for love.

Charles Radford had spoken to her about asking the clergyman of the village to marry them, but both knew it would be worse than useless, as she being under age, he would refuse to perform the ceremony without her father's consent, so when he proposed to her the scheme of flying with him to England she trusted him so fully that she consented. When leaving her father that afternoon her heart misgave her and she half resolved to tell Charles Radford that she would not go, but when he found her courage wavering, he pleaded so eloquently, and painted their future in such glowing colours that she again consented to his proposal. A boat containing some passengers who had been ashore for a short time, was going out to the steamer, and in it Kathleen accompanied her new lover. When they got on board he hurried her below and left her in the saloon, whilst he went to see the stewardess about selecting a stateroom for her.

She sat on a large crimson covered chair, there was a mirror opposite her and glancing quickly up she saw the reflection of two gentlemen talking, evidently of her, for she could see they were looking at her. Suddenly the face of one brightened, and touching his left hand he nodded in her direction, she glanced down at her own, and saw her aunt's ring shining brightly upon her third finger.

"How stupid of me," she thought, "not to have returned

my aunt's ring". Before she had time to think further Charles Radford joined her. He too had seen the gestures of the gentlemen and understood their meaning.

A thought leaped suddenly into his brain. He sat down quickly beside her, and was about to say something when one of the gentlemen came up to them saying; "Have I the honour of congratulating you Charlie?" Then it was that Charles Radford spoke the words which sealed his fate. He arose and taking Kathleen's hand, said: "Yes, this is my wife," and introduced them.

She had a vague kind of idea that it must be a joke. The man passed on, and now the steamer was moving off.

"Charlie!" she asked "What did you say I was your wife? we're not married! what made him think we were?"

"He has seen the wedding ring upon your finger," he answered; "and Kathleen darling, it has just occurred to me that it would be safer to pretend that we have been married before we came on board."

"Why safer? she asked. "What are we to be saved from?"

"Can you not trust me, Kathleen?" he replied. "Just consent to pass as my wife till we reach Liverpool, and then we shall be married immediately!"

"No!" she cried, "I will not consent to anything of the sort; I want everything to be open and above board. Why do you say it is safer to do this, I demand to know the reason?"

"To save your fair name!" he answered.

"To save my fair name!" she repeated, putting her hand to her head in a bewildered manner.

"Have you allowed me to do anything which would place my fair name in a questionable light?" and she fixed her dark eyes upon him.

He blushed, guiltily, under her gaze. "As my wife there will be no shadow upon your name," he told her. "And," she asked did you intend all along that I should pretend to be your wife?"

"Not until I saw those men remark the ring upon your finger; then I thought it best to do so."

"And up to that time, you were willing that my fair name should suffer. You took advantage of my ignorance. You urged me to do that which you would not dare ask one of your own class to do. The veil has fallen from my eyes, Charles Radford; I will never marry you, never! I must get ashore at

once. I will appeal to the Captain", and she made a movement to go on deck.

He caught her arm, "Are you mad, Kathleen?" he cried. "The Captain would laugh at such a request. I will say you are my wife, the wedding ring has been seen upon your finger, and the only thing that can save your reputation is your marriage with me."

She knew that what he said was true, unless she could get away then, she was in his power. It was no use to defy him, but he had deceived her, she would now deceive him.

"Yes," she said slowly, "it is too late now. I must abide by what I have done. I will go to my stateroom and remain there till we go ashore to be married, if you will marry me, having deceived me once, you may do so again."

"Time will show you, Kathleen," he said humbly, and she allowed him to lead her to the door. Not desiring to be questioned by any of his friends he went to his own room and locked himself in. Kathleen only waited till the sound of his footsteps had died away, when she opened her door and darted through the narrow passage, through the saloon and gained the deck. The steamer was moving slowly, bearing her away from all she loved. That first terrible feeling of homesickness came over her. Oh, for the strong right arm of Fred Daly to be near her now. How he would have guarded her from the breath of slander. She realised now how much she loved him.

Once she ceased to trust the man who had placed her in her present position, the fascination he had exercised over her was gone; the veil was rudely torn from her eyes and like her mother Eve, she had now the knowledge of good and evil.

She could see in the dim twilight the lights gleaming from her father's house. They were keeping close to the land for the great body of ice was not yet out of sight. As they rounded a curve of one of the high hills, Kathleen noticed a skiff manned by two fisherman. Oh to get on board it. Someone near her spoke—"Those men seem to want something?"

"I bet I know," answered his companion. "They are the men from whom the steward engaged a quantity of fresh eggs and butter, and they are bringing them. Kathleen recognized the second speaker as the companion of the man who had spoken to them in the saloon. She approached and touching his arm whispered: "Is it in your power to stop the ship and let me get off in yonder skiff?" She clasped her hands and looked up at

him imploringly. "I am not that man's wife, he has promised to marry me when we reach England, but I do not trust him!"

"And how do you account for this?" he asked, touching the ring.

"It is not mine, I've worn it for the past few weeks just for a lark. Oh Sir, believe and help me!"

"I do believe you, and I think I can help you, I'm an intimate friend of the Captain.." He went to the ship's side and called out. "Hello men you want to sell your goods? just keep as near as possible I'll see what can be done, and he went quickly away. In a short time the steamer came to a standstill, a boat was lowered and Kathleen found herself, accompanied by her protector, descending in to it. "Who are you?" she asked holding the hand of her rescuer as he helped her into the skiff. "Only an honest Englishman, who has daughters of his own," he replied. "I shall remember you with gratitude till I die!" she answered. The fishermen's goods were transferred to the ship's boat, they received the money, and their ways divided.

"Whatever made you stay on board and the ship going, Miss Kathleen," asked the elder of the men, who was well known to her? "I did not think she was leaving so soon, and the Captain did not know there was anyone on board who wanted to go ashore," she explained. Oh, what a sense of freedom and security Kathleen experienced as the boat skimmed along the waters. It was only now she knew how precious her home was to her. The fisherman's hut stood on the top of the hill and his kind wife pressed Kathleen to remain for the night as it was a six mile journey to her home and quite dark; but Kathleen thankfully refused the kind offer, and the good woman bade her son, Jack, tackle the dogs to the wood sled, and soon the fair truant was flying along the narrow snowy path. It was a three miles' drive, but Kathleen's heart was so overflowing with joy and thankfulness, that the length or fatigue of the journey did not trouble her. "I see the barque has got off too," Jack remarked, as they got within view of the harbour. Could Kathleen have known then, who was on board that departing ship, the gladness in her heart would have given place to despair, and the light of happiness have died from her eyes.

She reached home about ten o'clock, ran breathlessly towards the parlour, opened the door and looked in. Her

father was sitting near the table, his head bowed in his hands.

She rushed over to him, crying, "Father! Father!" and fell on her knees at his feet. The old man started up with a cry of joy, and clasped her in his arms. Her confession was made and she was freely forgiven. After a few moments of happy silence Kathleen spoke. "I wonder Father will Fred ever forgive me?"

Mr Doyle started to his feet. "In my joy at your return Kathleen," he said, "I had almost forgotten." "Bring my over-coat and hat, quickly. I will stop him if it is not too late," and in a few hurried words he told her of Fred's terrible vow.

"Too late, too late," she moaned, in a despairing voice. "Oh wretched, heartless girl that I am, the ship has sailed out the harbour over an hour ago."

That night, as she tossed sleeplessly to and fro upon her pillow, she shed some of the bitterest tears of her life, as she bewailed the mad folly which had wrought such fearful consequences.

* * * * *

Over five years have passed since the night that Kathleen Doyle returned to her father's home, lifting the heavy load of grief from his heart, and making once more the sunshine of his life.

It is a bright sunny day in June and our heroine is walking by the seashore. One can see at a glance that Kathleen has suffered. She has grown and matured with the years but her beauty is of a more spiritual type. Those dark eyes do not sparkle with merriment, as on that night when Charles Radford had proclaimed her "The Queen of the Fairy Dell."

The young summer sunshine is dancing on the sparkling waves, and all nature is clothed in a new gown of soft, emerald green. The harbour is dotted here and there with fishing smacks, for it is the eve of Sunday and the men are returning from the fishing grounds to prepare for the Sabbath. Kathleen gazed out over the sea with a wistful, yearning expression in her sad eyes, and a deep sigh came from the depths of her aching heart, as the murmured words escaped her lips.

"Will he ever return, will the cloud be ever lifted from my heavy heart. Has he found him and ere he learned the truth put his terrible vow into execution? Oh kind Heaven send me some message, some tidings, anything would be better than this suspense."

One boat which differed in size and appearance, from the rest, made its way up the harbour and anchored away off on the other side. Kathleen, watching, saw that a boat was being rowed away from its side and was coming across the harbour towards her. It came nearer and nearer. The girl watched it with a dreamy expression in her eyes; it seemed to fascinate her at last, and she could not remove her gaze. From that small boat a pair of eyes were eagerly watching the familiar shore. Larger and larger it grew, more and more distinct the tall graceful figure, until with a cry of joy Fred Daley recognizes his Kathleen. He leaned forward, a radiant smile upon his face. Kathleen felt like one in a dream.

Who was this man? he seemed to know her. What was there so familiar about his figure and movements?

Nearer and nearer he came, and at last in a moment of intense joy, she recognized him, and answered back his smile.

As his oar touched the land-wash, he sprang out and ran towards her. "Kathleen!" he cried. "Oh tell me quickly, are you still Kathleen Doyle, my own Kathleen?"

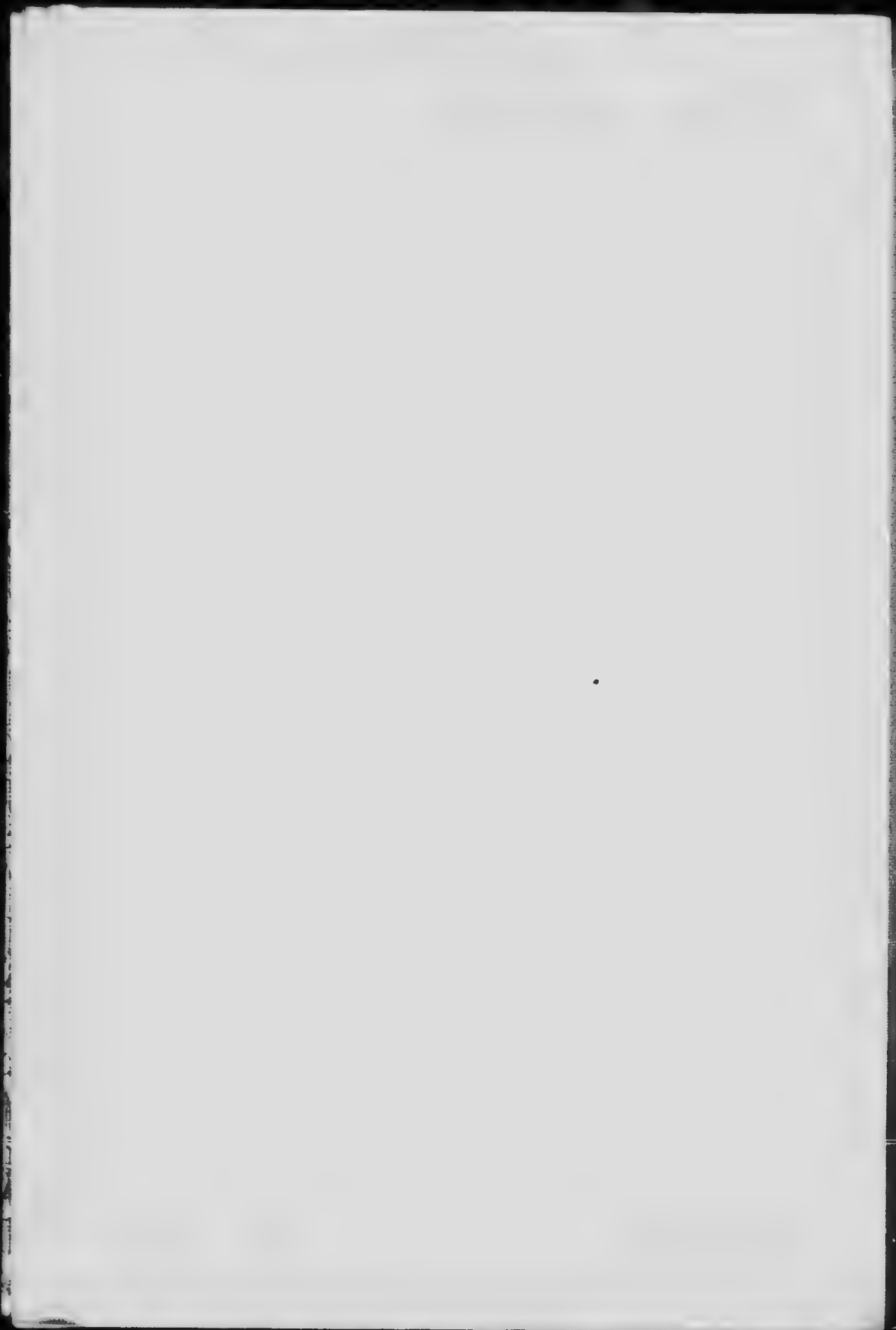
"I am still Kathleen Doyle, and your own Kathleen, Fred!" she answered.

There with the blue canopy of Heaven above them seated by the murmuring sea, Kathleen Doyle and Fred Daley, spent one of the happiest hours of their lives.

A few weeks later in the golden hush of a July morning, there was a quiet wedding in the village church, and a proud, happy man was Mr Doyle as he lead his daughter in and placed her hand in that of Fred's.

"I owe my happiness to Aunt Doyle's wedding ring," Kathleen told her husband as they came out man and wife; for it was the means of saving me from what would have been the mistake of my life."

THE END.



Grandma's Story on Christmas Eve.

CHAPTER I.

'T WAS an old-time stormy Xmas eve when a young man and maiden stood in the shelter of a porch in front of a pretty little farm-house situated on Portugal Cove Road. The snow drifted like a thick white vapour so that one could scarcely see a yard ahead. Night had settled down and the heavy clouds and drift obscured the moonlight. Not less cold and stormy than the fierce night outside was the face of Kitty O'Conner as she heaped a tirade of scornful words upon the young man near her.

"You've made a great mistake, Tom Burton," she was saying, "if you think you've nothing to do but flirt all you want to with Mary Nolan during my absence and then expect to be the same with me afterwards. You'll not make a laughing-stock of me."

The young man turned upon her a pained reproachful gaze.

"Surely, Kitty, you know that it's the farthest from my thoughts to make a laughing-stock of you, or do anything to vex you. You cannot mean that because I went with an old friend like Mary Nolan to a party, that I've made little of you."

"That is just what I do mean. She boasted that she would bring you to that party with her; I heard it before I went to spend the week with Uncle John, so it has just let me know what I might have to expect. I see plainly that you've neither love nor respect for me, and so I have resolved that we part to-night."

"And will you spoil both our lives because some chattering girls persuaded you that I made little of you? I cannot believe it, you are not your usual self to-night, Kitty. You've allowed

your temper to make you unreasonable. I'm very sorry if I have offended you, and so far as I have offended I apologize."

"I do not require any chattering girls to inform me of the fact that you've made little of me. I know it myself, and I will not accept your apology. You may think me angry, but I was never more cool or collected, and I tell you once for all that we part to-night for ever."

She seemed determined enough, so the young man thought, but still he pleaded. "Think, Kitty, of what this night is, Xmas Eve, the time of peace and good-will to all, when bitterest enemies forgive. I will not take your resolve as final for I feel sure that when the bells are ringing in the Xmas morn your heart will relent and you will see how unjust you are."

"My resolve is final, I will never alter it," she answered, "but," as he began buttoning his overcoat, "you surely are not going to venture to town this terrible night. I do not mean to turn you out of the house to be lost in the snow."

"You must allow me a little share of pride, Kitty. I will not intrude my unwelcome presence upon you, but I can be determined too, and only that I feel sure you are trampling under foot your better nature, I would leave you and never return, though it broke my heart. However I'll not face town now. I'll step over to old Carey's and when the bells are ringing at midnight I will come back and, Kitty, by that time I'm sure you will have conquered your unreasonable anger, so just come to the window and raise the blind a little and I will know that I am forgiven. Should you fail to do this I will believe that you love me no longer; in that case I'll weather the storm and start for home, but listen, Kitty, if you send me from you then I will never again seek a reconciliation; if you had just cause for anger I would not blame you and would plead for a month if need be."

Kitty would have given anything to have him go inside and not face the blinding storm, but her jealous pride kept her from asking him and a great lump rose in her throat, as he opened the porch door, stepped outside, and closed it after him.

CHAPTER II.

The O'Conner family consisted of Kitty her two younger brothers and sisters, their father and mother, and grandmother aged eighty. A wonderful old woman was Grandma O'Conner her form was erect, and her intellect as clear as it was forty years ago. It had been the custom for Tom Burton to remain with the family on Xmas Eve night and go with them to the break-of-day Mass next morning. Many a Xmas Eve was spent in listening to Grandma's stories of her childhood and girlhood before she left "Ould Ireland."

As Kitty entered all eyes turned upon her.

"Where's Tom?" they all asked in a chorus.

She looked very pale as she sat near Grandma and answered: "He has gone over to old Carey's."

"What a night to go there," said Kitty's mother. "Will he be long?"

Kitty answered evasively.

"If he stays long he'll have to wait till daylight to get back," remarked Farmer O'Conner.

"They've quarrelled," thought grandma whose old eyes were keener than all the others.

An inviting appearance this cosy kitchen presented. The ceiling was scrupulously white, a bright colored paper adorned the walls, mats were spread on the well-scrubbed floor, the kettle was singing on the hob, and the bright blaze from the huge "Xmas junk" in the open grate threw a warm glow round the kitchen. Two tallow candles burned in polished brass candle-sticks, and Mrs. O'Connor, junior, in a white apron and sleeves rolled to her elbows, was busy over a pan of flour, with currants, raisins, eggs, and spices piled up near her. At a table in a corner sat the two Masters O'Connor, engaged in a game of forty-fives. Grandma sat in her arm-chair with little Lizzie and Dolly at her feet begging for a story Kitty felt miserable and did not show the usual amount of

interest for one of Grandma's stories, but she felt she must rouse herself and appear to. "Grandma," she said, "I've just thought that I'm going to hold you to a promise you made last summer."

"What promise, child? I don't recollect," said Grandma, smiling.

"Don't you remember the day I brought in some plants from the field and asked you if they were shamrocks, and you said they were not like the real ones of Ireland, and I said I would like to see an Irish shamrock. I'll show you one you answered, and you went to that old chest in your bedroom and took out a withered shamrock and showed it to me. I asked why you kept one faded shamrock like that so carefully and you said, 'Ah child there's a story attached to that, perhaps I may tell you sometime, so this is just the night for it.'"

"Oh, yes," they all cried, "do please, Grandma, tell us the story."

Grandma smiled in a dreamy kind of way. Presently she whispered in Kitty's ear, "Have you and Tom quarrelled?"

"Yes Grandma," answered Kitty. "We've parted for ever."

He does not believe that I'm serious and says that he will come again, but my mind is made up."

"Very well," said Grandma, "draw near all of ye an' I'll tell the story." After a little hesitation she began.

"When I was a slip of a girl living in County Wexford, a handsome lad named Terry O'Flynn came courting me. Many were the walks that we had in the glen of summer evenin's where lots of other boys and girls met. an' Terry would see me home. I had one rival, a black-eyed beauty named Peggy O' Brien, and she vowed she'd take Terry from me if she tried.

Well, I was young an' foolish an' havin' lost me heart as completely to Terry as he'd lost his to me, I was very jealous and couldn't bear him to look in Peggy's direction. Terry had a soft corner in his heart for pretty girls but as he often towl'd me he had love only for one and that same's yersilf, Norah," he would say. Well, I was a pretty girl myself, and as vain as a peacock, an' thought Terry should have eyes for no one but me. It wint on like this till me sister, Biddy, who was married in Waterford: sint for me to go to her for a while, as she wasn't at all well, an' wanted her darlint sister just to cheer her up a bit. I didn't like laven Terry, and he didn't like lettin' me go, but I couldn't refuse poor Biddy, so I wint. Ah, will I iver forget

that good-bye? the last happy day for many an' many a year.

I stayed a month wid Biddy and thin left her. The day I reached Wexford some of the girls came to meet me and poured into me ears such stories of Terry and Peggy O'Brien that roused me to sich jealous anger that I determined to break our engagement that evenin'. I niver stopped to think whether the stories were true or not, but we know the ould sayin' 'the worst kind of lie is one wid a bit o' truth in it.' Ah, how well I remember when he came that same night, his big blue eyes dancin' with joy at seein' me agin, but I kept him off an' asked him how dare he come near me, and tould him to go back to Peggy O'Brien, that she'd do him now just the same as whin I was away.

"Why, Norah, Mavourneen," says he, "What ails, ye? sure wasn't I atin' me heart out all the time ye wur away. What's Peggy to me?"

"Ye can go now an' pass the rest o' the time wid her," I said, "for I'll niver take ye back agin, Terry O'Flinn. Ye doant ketch Norah Brady a fool a second time, and I tossed me head like this" said Grandma, illustrating the gesture. 'An is it me own darlint Norah is sayin' thim words to me," said Terry, "Shure allana, ye can't be manin' what yer sayin'. Doant ye know yer own Terry loves ye an' no one else.

Come now an' be your own lovin', purty silf agin," an' he tried to take me hand but I pushed him away and towl'd him he'd want to kiss the Blarney Stone a good many times before I'd swallow any more of his, and thin I ordered him to lave me that minit. "Shure I'll do that same, Norah, if 'tis only to plase ye," he said, "but I'll come again to-morrow, an' perhaps ye'll give me a warmer welcome."

Well he came agin and agin, and still I was determined. though me heart was nigh brakin' each time, for I loved me own boy just the same as ever. I'm sure 'twas the ould boy himself that kept puttin' in me head of how handsome Peggy looked with her sparklin' black eyes, an' that Terry perhaps often took hould of her hand, or put his arm around her waist which looked just as invitin' as me own, or even went so far as to kiss her, for Terry had a weakness that way. So I kept thinkin' to meself that maybe after a long time, whin I'd punished him as much as he desarved, I'd forgive him but I pretended that I hated the sight of him. "Arrah, Norah alanna," me poor mother would say, "Shure ye know it was only idle

gossip they were tellin' ye. Poor Terry is as true as iver he was. Can't ye make it up with the poor boy." But I wouldn't listen to her. Well, the summer passed and autumn came an' I hadn't seen Terry for a long time till one evenin' I was goin' to the dairy with a pail of milk when he came in sight. He looked so sad and pale that me heart smote me an' I felt ready to cry. But I managed to look as cold and proud as iver, and asked him what he wanted?"

"I jist came to bid ye good bye, Norah alanna," he said.

"I'm going away and its yersilf as is drivin' me. I niver desarved your tratement of me, so I thought I'd see ye once more jist to make sure if ye think ye couldn't care for me agin as in the ould days before ye wint to Waterford; 'tis the last time I'll trouble ye darlint. I'm not goin' for a week yet, but I won't come agin, if ye dhrive me from ye now 'tis foriver, Norah." Ah what kept me from tellin' him that I was his own Norah an' that he was me own boy Terry? Nothin' but me stubborn pride. Niver mind he'll come agin, whispered the Divil an' I listened to him. 'Foriver an' a day' I laughed with a saucy toss of me head tho' me heart felt ready to burst, so let it be, did ye bid Peggy O'Brien good-bye yet? The moment the heartless words left me lips I could have bitten off me tongue, me poor boy his face got very white, an' he looked at me so reproachful like, wid his Irish blue eyes that I would have flown to him only that some stubborn vein in my body wouldn't let me. "Good-bye Norah," he said holdin' out his hand, "a day'll come whin ye'll be sorry for this," an' it did come. I put my hand in his, an' he held it for a few moments. I was nigh breakin' down thin; he'll come agin I thought an' once more I succeded in hardenin' me heart. He walked away an' his handsome face disappeared from me view for iver."

Here Grandma seemed a little overcome. She leaned her head on her hand for a few moments.

"Oh, Grandma," sobbed Kitty, "was it forever? How could you let him go?" At length she proceeded. "He wore a bunch of shamrocks in his hat an' as he walked away one dropped from it. I picked it up an' kept it iver since an' that's the one I showed you Kitty."

"And is that all?" asked Kitty.

"Ah I wish it was all, child, but the hardest part got to come yet. I was punished, as I well desarved for me pride

an' injustice. Day after day I hoped that Terry would come agin before he'd go away, but he didn't and three months later the sad news reached Wexford that the ship in which me poor boy sailed was lost with all on board.

Then came me punishment, I looked upon meself as a murderess, for wouldn't me darlint be wid me, alive an' well, instead of lying at the bottom of the ocean if I hadn't driven him from me. Oh, how I fretted an' grew thin an' pale.

Night after night I lay awake wonderin' if he thought of me whin he felt the waters closin' over him, an' if so did he curse me as the cause of his death, till I grew nearly frantic. I was niver the same light-hearted, happy girl after. When years passed away an' I grew calmer, a longin' came over me to know if Terry was happy; had he time, when snatched so suddenly from life, to ask pardon for his sins? Mother brought our Parish Priest to me, and he advised me to marry. I had more than one offer at the time, but I made a vow that unless I received some sign that Terry was happy, I should never marry.

"A rash vow" so the priest told me. Well, years after, whin I was about thirty-six a good, dacent well-to-do man asked me to have him, but I refused because of me vow. Day an' night I prayed for some sign from Heaven to tell me if Terry was happy. Well I suppose God must have seen that I suffered enough for he sent me the sign. One summer's morning I awoke very early, I was dreamin' of Terry. I thought he came an' towd me that he'd be happy only that in spite of all remonstrance I was keepin' to the rash vow that I'd made.

Something made me get up and go to the window. I raised the blind, an' there standing near a tree about twinty yards from me I saw Terry jist as he looked in life except that the glad, happy light upon his face did not seem of this world it looked brighter an' holier. I stood spellbound watching him for I couldn't tell how long, till at last he gradually faded from before me eyes. I wasn't a bit frightened but I must have fainted for whin I came to mysilf I was lyin' on the floor. I was ill for a week after, but whin I recovered I felt happier an' better than I'd been for years. Of course no one believed me story the priest said I dreamt it an' walked to the window in my sleep, but well I knew that it was Terry's spirit sint from Heaven to let me know that he was happy. Well then, John" said Grandma with a glance at Kitty's father who was lying on the bench "I married your father an' came out here with him

an' a good husband he was, we lived very happy together an' sorry enough I was whin he died, poor man." Grandma then leaned back in her chair as a sign that she had finished.

Kitty could not take her thoughts from the handsom young lover who had met such a cruel death, and was she not doing the same? Was not her stubborn pride making her unjust to Tom Burton? Over an hou had passed the fire had burned low, the snow-drifts beat furiously against the window panes. Farmer O'Conner opened the window of an adjoining room so that the sound of the joy-bells might reach them. Soon they rang out their soft musical peal, "Peace on earth to men of good will." The family went on their knees and now their thoughts were directed to the manger of Bethlehem, to the chorus of angels singing "Glory be to God, Hosanna in the Higest." Kitty was fighting a battle; should she go to the window and tell him he was forgiven? No she decided, he must come and ask her, of course he would come too and everything would be alright. When the last chime of the bells had died away in the midnight storm her heart felt heavy as lead. Presently Farmer O'Conner arose and closed the window. "A terrible night for any poor creature to be on the road," he remarked. "Anyone starting from here for town to-night would never reach there."

Kitty's heart gave a great bound, what was it Tom said, "he'd weather the storm and start fo. home unless she let him know that he was welcome." Instantly she made towards the door. No one noticed her departure. As she opened the outer door a cloud of drift nearly blinded her. She took a cloak and wrapping it about her stepped outside. Yes, Tom had been there, she could see his tracks in the snow, he could not be long gone. All fear, anger, and jealousy were now forgotten. Every step she took was up to her knees in snow, and when she came to the gateway she had to simply push her body through. On she went keeping as well as she could in Tom's tracks. At length she became exhausted, and now it struck her how foolish she had acted in not telling all to her father and getting him to go with the two boys. She decided to do it now, and turned homeward only to realize that it was an impossibility to retrace her steps for the wind was in her face and the drift nearly smothered her, so that she had to turn again quickly to catch her breath. So on she went a few more yards until she became beaten out and could

go no further. And now it dawned upon her that she was lost. To go on was impossible; to turn back more impossible. She would be found dead in the snow next day and Tom also. He could never reach town in such a storm, and she had driven him to his death just as Grandma had done the lover of her youth. This thought made her desperate, and as loudly as she could she cried "Tom! Tom! come back, oh, come back!" She wondered if there would be any chance of his hearing her.

She called till she grew hoarse. At last all her strength left her and despairing and exhausted she sank into the snow.

Tom Burton reached Farmer O'Conner's gate just as the bells began to ring, and remained till they ceased; then with a feeling of indignation he braved the storm towards home.

But he soon began to realize that if the whole road to town was as bad as this, he could not travel it that night. His manly pride forbade him returning to Kitty's, and if he went back to Carey's they would wonder why, as he left it for Farmer O'Conner's. Yes, he thought he must go on and risk it. Suddenly there came a lull in the wind, and his ear caught the sound of a voice. He listened and heard it again. It sounded like someone crying for help, and came from some distance behind him. He decided to go back. He could not listen to a human creature crying for help and not try to assist him. But as he heard it again he fancied it was a woman's voice. The wind arose as fiercely as ever, he had travelled back some distance, but he did not hear the voice and wondered if he had been deceived when he noticed a fragment of something moving in the snow, he caught hold of it and pulled vigorously, it came with him and proved to be a woman's cloak and under it, lying face downwards, was Kitty. She was nearly unconscious, but as he raised her, she revived.

"Oh, Tom," she cried, "you are safe, thank God. Why did you not come in and not mind the hasty words I said?"

"Thank God that I'm in time to save you, my own brave little girl." And together they faced the blinding drift. Tom felt strong enough now to brave any storm; he almost carried the half frozen girl to her father's cottage, where great consternation was exhibited at their condition. Some hours later when Kitty had somewhat revived and Tom sitting near her at the fire she told him Grandma's story and how it was thro' her she had seen how unjust she was to him. Next morning two men who had left for town the previous night were found

dead in the snow and without doubt Tom Burton would have met the same fate had not Kitty's voice called him back, and so both think, tho' neither speak, but looks are often more eloquent than words, and now Kitty Burton tells to her grandchildren the story—with her own attached—that great, great grandma O'Connor told them so long ago one Xmas Eve around the Yule log.

THE END.



A Year Too Late.

CHAPTER I.

ELEVEN o'clock had long since tolled out from the old church tower on the hill one Xmas Eve long ago, and a girl, with an eager, expectant look on her smiling face, leaned over 'the green half door' of a house in an isolated by-road. It was a beautiful night, and instead of frost, and snow it promised to be a "Green Xmas." The moon was shedding its silvery light over the moist earth, and the air was soft and balmy. Presently a man's quick, firm tread is heard approaching, and in a few moments he is by her side, her hands clasped in his. "How late you are, Charlie?" said the girl; "I thought you would never come."

"Yes Fanny," he answered "I'm later than I expected. I could not get away before, we were extra busy to-night, and now, sweetheart we must put our fate to the test, and ask your father's consent to our engagement within an hour."

The girl's face grew a shade paler as she looked up with such faith and trust into her lover's brown eyes. "Oh, Charlie!" she said, "I feel so nervous, I am sure he will never consent he is so bitter against your father that I fear nothing will move him."

"But, Fanny, dearest, I cannot help what my father did. It is not just that our happiness must be blighted for the sin of another."

"It is most unjust, but yet I know that he will never consent."

"And should he not, what will you do Fannie. will you send

me from you and break my heart and your own, all for this unreasonable prejudice of your father?"

The girl remained in deep thought for awhile, then looking up with a grave earnest face she said "I love my father and mother very much, Charlie, and if I must part from them in anger, I can never again be perfectly happy. But should the worst come, which I fear, I will leave them, aye, and all the world besides, for I could not live without you," and she leaned her head against his shoulder, her eyes glowing with eloquence, and her face resolute as she uttered the words which told of the deep, pure and noble love which filled her heart for the man whose wife she was to be.

"And you shall never regret it, darling," he murmured, his voice low with emotion, "for even if we must marry without his consent, we will be so humble and plead so earnestly that after a time he will forgive us."

And now the deep, joyous tones of the Christmas bells fell upon the midnight air. It is the hour they are waiting for; they had arranged that when the bells ushered in the dawn of Christmas, when the herald angels were singing "Hosanna in the Highest; Peace, peace on earth to all men," they would go to Mr Benson, Fannie's father, and plead forgiveness for the injury he believed was done him years ago by Charlie Bryant's father, and that he would give him as a peace offering his only daughter.

"Fanny," and Mrs Benson appeared from the kitchen, "Come in child, you'll catch your death of cold. You can hear the bells inside just as well as out here. Oh, Mr Bryant," as she caught sight of Charlie, "I didn't know you were here. Do not come in," she said in a low voice, "John will be so angry."

"I am going to brave his anger to-night, Mrs Benson," said the young man, smiling. "That is why I am here at this hour. We are going to ask his blessing and consent on our union, and I feel sure he will not refuse when the bells are speaking to us of peace and joy, love and forgiveness."

"Ah you do not know him," answered Mrs Benson. "Nothing will ever take away the bitter feeling he has against your father. Still if you are bent upon asking him to-night, do so but I know he will never consent."

The three then entered. A bright fire from the large open grate, threw a cheerful glow round the clean, cozy kitchen, and

on a bench near the fire sat John Benson smoking a clay pipe. He looked up as the door opened, and in his face there was no sign of relenting, but an expression of sullen determination.

Charlie Bryant walked straight towards the old man leading Fannie, who shrank somewhat back, by the hand.

"Mr Benson," he said, "It is Christmas morn. The Angels are singing of peace, good-will and forgiveness, will you not lay aside your resentment against my dead Father, your prejudice to me, in honour of him who this day came from Heaven to live amongst us, and give me, as a peace offering, the dearest treasure in your possession, your little Fanny. We love each other so well that we cannot part, and I will promise to spend my life in trying to atone for the wrong you believe my father did you. Just think how happy you would make us all this blessed morn by giving your consent and blessing to our union."

The old man sprang from the bench snatching his pipe from his mouth, his eyes blazed with anger and his face grew white and stern. "Is this the way you have obeyed my orders?" he said addressing his daughter. "Have I not time and again forbidden you to keep company with this man, this son of a thief and a blackmailer. And now you have the audacity to stand there beside him while he asks my consent to make you his wife; take yourself off as fast as you can," he said turning to Charlie Bryant, "or, old as I am, I will throw you out the door."

"Oh, Father!" cried the girl, "do not say such things to Charlie, he cannot help what his father did be a little kind to us, I was sorry to disobey you but I could not help it, I love him so well that I cannot part from him."

"But I say you shall part from him, girl, and you will go down on your knees in his presence and make me a solemn promise never to willingly see him again."

"I could not do that, father," she replied. "I could not give you such a promise because I would only break it the first opportunity." "Do you mean to defy me like this, girl," he thundered, "do you mean that you will marry this man whether I consent or not?"

"We will wait, father," answered Fanny who was trembling and very pale, "and perhaps after another year you will not be so hard upon us, and I will promise not to see him often. But I could not part from him altogether, it would break my heart

and I should die, and then you would have no daughter at all," venturing a little smile. "And I would far rather have no daughter than see her the wife of a man whose father allowed me to suffer in prison for a theft which he committed." "Mr Benson," said Charlie Bryant, "I cannot bear to hear you say such things of my father, whatever happened that money or whoever took it he did not, he was the soul of honesty."

"Then you scamp," said the angry old man, "you mean that I took it though I saw your father steal from the office."

"I neither mean nor believe anything of the kind," answered Charlie; "I say that there has been some terrible mistake all through."

"Go now, said John Benson, "and let me never see you cross my threshold again."

"I will not give up Fanny, Sir," said the young man determinedly.

"Well, she shall give you up, and this very night too," he said, in a loud voice, "do you hear girl, tell him to go, that you'll never marry him." "I cannot, father, she answered.

"You cannot," he echoed, "Say rather you will not, and since you chose, before your father and mother, the son of him who degraded and cast me into prison, to suffer for his crime, the same roof can no longer shelter us, this very hour you go from this house never again to enter it."

"John, John," cried his wife, beseechingly, "Think of what you are doing; surely you cannot mean to drive her from her only home, on Christmas morning, too. Oh, do not be so hard upon her, give her a little time."

"No," he answered, "unless she does what I have told her, she shall leave this house to-night, on that I am determined."

"Fannie, child," cried the poor mother distractedly, "do what your father asks of you—tell Charlie you cannot marry him."

"No, mother," sobbed the poor girl, as she threw herself into her arms, "I cannot, I could pretend to do so and deceive you both, but I won't do that, because I mean to marry him." Oh, father! for mother's sake do not be so hard, it will break her heart if you drive me away."

"It is you who are doing it," he said, angrily. "Do you think I am to be brow-beaten in my own house by you and your miserable lover? Go both of you, and let this scene end, get

married as soon as you please, and instead of the blessing, you came to ask, take my bitterest curse."

"Oh, father!" cried the poor girl throwing herself on her knees before him, "take back those words, oh, anything but that, do not curse me."

"I give you one more chance then," he said. "Will you do what I asked you just now?" "I could not, father, she replied, "My heart would not let me."

"Then begone from my presence ungrateful girl, and may sorrow gnaw at your heart, may want and misery come in at your door and may this son of a villian for whom you are turning your back upon those who gave you being, wring your soul with anguish." "Come, Fanny, dearest," said Charlie Bryant leading her towards the door, "you have listened to enough of this, it is too much for you," for the girl was trembling and pale as leath, "and," he said, turning towards the bitter old man, "remember Mr Benson, curses oftener fall upon those who invoke them, rather than those upon whom they are invoked."

Mrs Benson followed them to the outer door. "Oh! what will you do, where will you go?" sobbed the poor woman clasping her child in her arms.

"Do not fear for her in the least, Mrs Benson," said Charlie "she shall be well cared for. I will take her to my Aunt, who knows all about us and will gladly take charge of her for a day or two, until I make arrangements for our marriage."

"Then I'll go with you and see my child in a good woman's care before I leave her," said Mrs Benson.

"By all means," replied the young man, "and I shall see you safely home again."

Charles Bryant's Aunt was most happy to receive Fanny, and in two days afterwards they were married.

CHAPTER II.

Again it is Christmas Eve, a year later, the time is nine o'clock at night. Has the ill-luck, John Benson invoked upon his only child recoiled upon himself? It seems so, for sorrow has gnawed at his heart, poverty and want, have entered his door. When disgrace had deprived him of his situation he had taken up shoe-making of which he had a previous knowledge, and had been prosperous and successful until the past year.

His neighbours one and all, had condemned his treatment of his daughter. By degrees he lost custom, and to-night he finds he is scarcely able to supply for himself and his wife the necessaries for Xmas. In spite of his harsh treatment of her, he loved his child, dearly, so much so that her loss had almost broken his heart, and his spirit, though he would not admit it, even to himself.

Fanny made several attempts to see him, but he refused her admittance each time, driving her from the door with bitter words. He forbade his wife seeing or speaking to her, but in this case the poor mother felt justified in obeying the dictates of her heart, and, unknown to her husband, had visited her child often.

Fanny was happy in her husband's love and devotion, prosperity smiled upon them, but her father's bitter resentment towards her threw a dark cloud over the sunshine of her life.

On the bench near the fire, where John Benson still works are laid several pairs of shoes, he is engaged at another pair, working by the light of one tallow candle. His faithful wife sits near him trying to repair some well-worn garment. Both their thoughts are with the dear absent one, who, at this time last year was the sunshine of their lives. He put the finishing touches to the last shoe, and with a sigh, laid it on the bench beside the others. "They'll scarcely call for them to-night, John," remarked Mrs Benson, "it has been snowing hard since tea-time."

John Benson walked wearily to the window. "It is a pretty

bad night," he said, "and getting worse, what are we most in need of for to-morrow, Mary?" he asked.

"Well, John," she replied, "if we had a little bit of fresh meat, and a few things to make up a cake and a pudding, we could manage very well. We have bread and vegetables, and firing enough, and if we got a pint or so of kesosene oil, we could have a nice, bright light, for Christmas, since the light of our hearts is gone from us," and the poor woman wiped away a tear.

"No more of that," answered the old man, sharply, as he began drawing on his long boots, after which he tied a muffler round his neck.

"Where are you going, John"? asked his wife.

"I am going to take these shoes home," he replied. "The night is so stormy they may not come for them and we want the money."

"We want the money, right enough, John, but it's a long tramp for you, after working hard all day."

"The tramp will do me good," he answered. Desolate and heavy-hearted, the old man felt as he stepped out into the snow-storm. It was no easy work, carrying the large bundle of shoes under his arm, and he felt relieved when he had disposed of the last pair to the owner. He received payment for all, and making his purchases, prepared to return home.

He was on Water Street, in the eastern part of the city. Suddenly, there came, mingled with the snow and wind, the sound of hoarse cries, and, presently, a crowd of rough-looking fellows appeared in sight, nearly blocking up the whole street.

Some of them were Scotch sailors, and intoxicated. One, was engaged in a fight with a Newfoundlander, and was getting the worst of it, when some of his companions tried to give him assistance. "Stand back, there, you cowards," cried a sturdy Terra Novian, and now another fight ensued. In a short time about a dozen were engaged in the combat. The crowd outside closed in around them, and now they were one confused mass. John Benson tried to get away, but the mob pressed heavily against him, and all he could do was to keep quiet, and watch his chance of escape. Presently, cries of horror arose from the centre. "He's stabbed! he's stabbed!" and the crowd now fell back as some soldiers pushed their way through.

John Benson, by some chance, found himself close behind

the soldiers, and gazing upon the wounded man whose blood was staining the pure, white snow, the light from a shop window fell full upon his face.

"Merciful Heaven!" he murmured, "who is he with the face of Charles Bryant, my life-time enemy, who has been dead for years?"

The unfortunate man whose hand had done the deed, was immediately taken into custody, and the injured man was borne to the nearest house available. A doctor was summoned who pronounced the wound to be fatal, but that he would live through the night. When it was dressed, and a draught administered the man opened his eyes. Without being seen by him, John Benson watched him, awe, and wonder written on his face.

"Tell me how long I have to live, doctor," said the dying man.

"You will live through the night, without doubt," answered the physician.

"I've a confession to make," he murmured, "and I must do it now, strange, that chance should bring me here to make it, here where I committed the crime. Well, if I am to expect pardon when I reach the other side I must make what atonement I can, I must clear his name."

The man's voice was very weak, his face showed signs of dissipation.

"If you've a confession to make," replied the doctor, "you must do it in as few words as possible. You cannot afford to waste your strength, my man."

In haste, a lawyer was summoned, and, in a faltering voice, the dying man spoke:—

"About twenty years ago, a man named John Benson, suffered in prison for a theft, of which I was guilty. He believed, and believes still, if he is alive, that the thief was another, and that other my twin-brother, Charles Bryant, who is dead now

There was little known of me, in Newfoundland I was wild, and evil-inclined always, he was quite the opposite. I went to sea when very young; I had disgraced my family and they were ashamed to own me, and never mentioned my name, so that a great many here forgot my existence, and others knew nothing of me. Once, our ship, accidentally put in here.

I visited my father's house, the same night, and got a cold reception. I asked for my brother, and, was told, that he was

at his place of business. I knew where it was, and went to see him. To be plain, I wanted money, from him. When I got to the store, it was closed, but there was a light inside, and I knew, that the hands were at work. I went around to a side-entrance, for I knew the place well, as a boy,—intending, to wait for Charlie. A young lad, passed out, and I asked him, if Charlie Bryant was inside."

"Hard to be inside, and outside, at one time," he answered. "Too busy a night for joking, Mr Bryant," and he went off laughing.

"For a while I was at a loss to understand him. Then it dawned upon me, that he took me for Charlie. I had left off my sailor's garb when coming ashore, and was dressed in a tweed suit. His face too, must have been clean-shaven like my own, or else I could not be taken for him. It was a little cold, and I stood inside the door, finding myself at the foot of a stairs which led to a small office off the shop. The proprietor was there talking to someone, so I kept very quiet. Presently I heard him say, "I suppose there is no danger in leaving this money here to-night."

"Not at all," he was answered, "it has often been left here and was always safe."

"I don't think it necessary, after all, for the hands to remain all night. I daresay we can get through the remainder of the packing to-morrow morning. They all think so but Benson. He says he wishes to finish his part of the work before morning, and besides, he has taken over a part of Bryant's, who felt very ill to-night and has gone home."

"Ha! I thought so;" I said to myself, "they deceived me at home, they do not want me to see him. Well, I need not say how the money tempted me; a sudden fierce anger took possession of me. Benson would be there alone, and if he did see me, he would take me for Charlie. Just about midnight my opportunity came. The "Boss" was the last to leave, Benson locking the door after him, but leaving the key in it. When he had gone back to his work, I crept noiselessly from under the stairs where I had hidden, and stole quietly to the top. I could hear Benson at work in a far corner, but could not see him.

I opened the door of the small room without any trouble, the key, through some mistake, having been left in the lock.

The desk, containing the money, was fastened with a spring, which, after a little fumbling, opened. I seized a roll

of bank-notes, about fifty pounds, and made for the door. To my surprise, I found Benson standing quite near, looking at me.

"How did you get in?" he asked.

"I'll tell you in a moment," I answered, as I ran down the stairs, and in a quarter of an hour was on board my vessel.

We sailed next morning, and a long time afterwards, I read in an old morning post, an account of the robbery, and, to my surprise, found that poor Benson was convicted of the crime and sent to prison, the strongest evidence against him being his accusation of Charlie, who was proven by the doctor who attended him and by many others, to be very ill, and in bed at the hour that Benson swore he spoke to him in the store."

The dying man lay back exhausted, his strength nearly gone. Ah! what were John Benson's feelings at that moment? no one there knew him and he would not make himself known, fearing it would excite the wounded man, and perhaps, hasten his death, so he passed unnoticed from the house. It had stopped snowing, and the moon shone out clear, and soft.

How small now, seemed all the years of bitter resentment, which he had cherished in his heart towards the friend who had never wronged him, towards the son of that friend, because he dared to love his daughter, and that daughter he had driven from his door, with harsh words and imprecations. But a sudden joy filled his heart; he could undo it all. Yes! and that very night. The thought lent wings to his feet and when he reached home he burst into the room with the words, "God be praised Mary, that this night, after so many years the stain is removed from my name, my honesty will be vindicated before the world, and the sin and bitterness has left my heart." In a few words he told her all. "Oh, thank God! thank God!" exclaimed the good woman, while tears of joy rolled down her cheeks.

"Quick, Mary, quick," he said, "it has stopped snowing, get ready and come with me, I must go to Fanny to-night. I cannot sleep till I ask her forgiveness, and that of her husband, and give them the blessing they asked of me a year ago."

Gladly, Mary Benson prepared for her journey, and with hearts filled with joy and gratitude, they directed their steps towards their daughter's home.

Just as they reached the door of Charles Bryant's house, the Christmas bells rang out. Oh! this hour last year, he had

given them his curse instead of the blessing they had craved, but he would undo it all now. Alas; "Man proposes," etc. Mrs Benson who was quite familiar with the house, opened the door and entered, her husband following her. They found Charles Bryant seated in the parlor, his face buried in his hands. John Benson went up to him, and in a few hurried words told him of his discovery, then with outstretched hands he said.

"Charles Bryant, at this very hour last year you came and asked for my only child, together with my consent and blessing in honour of the holy night it was. I refused, and gave instead my curse, driving you both from my home and heart forever. I now take back all the hard, bitter things I said, and ask you to forgive an old man's injustice, and let peace, and good will reign in our hearts for ever; take me to my child and let me give you both my blessing. Charles Bryant rose from the chair; "Yes," he said, a stern, set look on his face, "I will take you to Fanny, follow me, but first look here," and lifting the covering from a tiny cot, exposed the face of an infant apparently a few hours old. "This is our child," he explained.

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Mrs. Benson. "Why did she not send for me?" He then led them to an inner room and going towards the bed, he said in slow, solemn tones. "There, Mr Benson, lies all that is earthly of Fannie, your blessing has come a year too late; a few hours ago, her pure soul winged its flight to Paradise." Words cannot describe the grief, and remorse of the helpless old man. Moreover, when he learned that the physician was of the opinion that the constant grief, and worry over her father's harsh treatment, had somewhat unfitted her constitution to bear up against her illness, and helped to bring about her unexpected death.

After his wife's burial, Charles Bryant left Newfoundland, leaving his little daughter with John and Mary Benson, and did not return for many years, and perhaps, on this Christmas Eve, her great, great, grand-daughter, may stand, where Fanny once stood," not leaning over a "green half door," but in a grandly lighted vestibule, while a lover's vows fall sweetly on her ear, as the bells are telling in their mystic tones, of the hour of The Saviour's birth.

THE END.



A Lucky Christmas Gift.

MANY years ago there might be seen situated in the outskirts of St. John's city, an old studded house. Tho' unpretentious in appearance it had once been the scene of many home comforts, where love, mingled with happiness and contentment, dwelt.

A merry family circle they were till death entered and robbed the home of its guardian angel.

Soon after her mother's death, Mary, the youngest child, accompanied her uncle to America.

He had gone to St. John's for a visit after some years absence, and as he had no family, he, after much difficulty, persuaded his brother to allow his daughter to depart with him, saying that he and his wife would treat her as tho' she were their own child, and painting in glowing colors the advantages she would receive which were denied her here. So Michael Dillon, grief stricken and spirit broken, very reluctantly consented to her going with the provision that she was to return in a few years.

His eldest daughter, after one year of married life, had lost her husband, and was then, with her little daughter, Nellie, living with her father.

Three fine boys were the other members of the Dillon family, and for some years after little Mary's departure they lived on prosperously and happily till that dreadful scourge, Asiatic cholera visited St. John's, and in one week swept the old man's home of his daughter and three sons, leaving him with only his little grand-child, Nellie.

His health soon began to fail, and after a few years, what means he had laid by became exhausted, and poverty began to make itself felt.

* * * * *

It is Christmas Eve with its frost and snow, its keen north-easter. It has stormed and snowed all day, but now the gale seems to have exhausted its fury, and with a few low parting growls was gradually retiring. Some broken panes of glass in the windows of Michael Dillon's house has been supplied by pieces of stiff paper tacked on to the sash. A low fire burns in the grate, and the feeble light of a tallow candle reveals the wasted face of Michael Dillon. He is lying upon a bed in a small room leading from the kitchen. By his side sits a young girl of sixteen, an anxious, worried look upon her sweet patient face. The wind gave one more dismal howl and the snow beat against the windows. The old man opened his eyes and smiled upon the young face bending over him.

"Are you feeling better, grandfather?" she asked.

"Oh, never mind me, child," he answered, "I'm only a drag and a hindrance to you. Without me you would be better off; you would not be living in this wretched hovel amid cold and poverty. I should have gone to the Poor House as they wanted me, but somehow I could not bear to do it. I thought that, perhaps, something might happen before to-night. I hoped that my Mary would come back to me. Ah, I know that she would help me if she knew how badly I need it, but how can I tell whether she is alive or not; those long years of silence must mean something."

Then after a pause he asked:

"Have you had your tea, child, and what did you have for it?"

"Do not trouble about me, grandfather," a sweet voice answered. "Yes, I have had my tea."

"What did you have?" persisted the old man.

"Some bread and tea, grandfather."

"Bread and tea," he repeated, "and what have you got for to-morrow?"

The girl looked distressed as she answered, "there are some vegetables in the house and Mrs Neyle promised to send a sweet loaf and some butter, and I am going presently to buy some wood and coal with a little money I earned by making a suit for baby Giles. But these things are no good for you

grandfather." I'm alright, I'm young and have a good appetite and can eat everything but you are old and ill and require nourishment. You should have a little wine, some beef tea and eggs, and I cannot get them for you."

The girl's voice broke and bowing her head upon her hands she wept bitterly.

Michael Dillon placed his feeble hand upon her head. "Don't, Nellie, child," he said, "to-morrow is Christmas Day, perhaps the last I shall spend with you, we shall be happy in spite of all. You'll see how I'll do justice to the sweet loaf and whatever you will have for dinner. I can do very well without wine and beef tea; it is grief and disappointment that ails me to-night. For the past two months the idea has taken possession of me that my Mary would come back to me this Christmas. I have prayed, oh, so fervently, that God would send her to me as the most precious gift I could receive, I have filled myself with the notion that my prayer would be granted, and now my disappointment seems greater than I can bear, for she is not here and no ship could enter the Narrows on such a night as this. Well, His ways are not our ways and His blessed Will be done. I will get up to-morrow and we will take our Christmas dinner together such as it is. You have no one to give you a Christmas gift, Nellie."

"I do not mind that, grandfather," she answered bravely. "I know if you could do it you would give me one and that is just as good."

"And who says I cannot give you one?" said the old man, a sudden light coming into the dim eyes. "Open that chest of mine over there in the corner and bring me a small box you will find in it?"

The girl obeyed bringing a tiny tin box to the bedside. Michael Dillon opened it and reverently taking from it a small morocco case placed it in the girl's hands. "Here child," he said, "is a Christmas gift, you're now old enough to wear it, it belonged to your dear mother. Open the case and tell me how you like it."

Nellie opened it and gazed upon a pretty gold brooch with a diamond in the centre. On the other side was a piece of glass fitted so as to keep in place a braid of hair which was tinged with grey.

"This," said Michael Dillon, "is a valuable brooch, there was another exactly like it and I gave it to your aunt, my little

Mary, when she left me. Both belonged to your great-grandmother and she left them with her only daughter, your grandmother, and my dear wife, who left one to each of her daughters; now that your mother is dead this belongs to you, so, you see, it is not a gift from myself after all, Nel' . . . but only your own property given to you. That hair which you see inside the glass is your great-great-grandmother's so that the brooch might be looked upon as quite a family heirloom.

With awe and admiration Nellie gazed upon her Christmas gift.

"Oh, thank you, grandfather," she said, in a grateful tone "How I shall prize it and love it if only for my dear mother's sake alone. I trust I shall be as faithful a guardian for our family heirloom as my ancestors have been."

"That stone in the centre," said Michael Dillon, "is the most valuable part of the brooch; it is a real diamond, fasten it in your dress, child, till I see how you look with it."

Nellie did so, and after surveying her critically for a while, the old man seemed satisfied.

"Yes, it suits you nicely, Nelly," he said.

"Is it really my own, grandfather," asked the girl, "to do as I please with, or is it mine only to wear whilst I live and then leave to my nearest of kin?"

"It is your own, little girl, to do as you please with, and to give away when and to whom you choose but, of course, I know you will keep it always till you give it to a daughter of your own by-and-by."

"Of course, grandfather," assented the girl.

There was silence for some time and, bending over him Nellie found that her grandfather had fallen asleep, and now her busy brain was at work to devise some means of getting the necessary nourishment for him. She unfastened the brooch from her neck and looked at it.

"If I only dared sell it," she thought, "but grandfather would never forgive me. Yet what is it in comparison with his life?"

Suddenly a bright idea struck her, her grandfather had said the stone was the most valuable part of it. Why not take it to the jeweller's and sell the diamond getting him to replace it by an inferior one; her grandfather would never know, the brooch was her own to do as she pleased with. True, she would be practising a deception, but it was in a good cause and

something must be done to procure the necessaries to save his precious life. Why, she might get two, or even three pounds, and already she pictured herself returning with a bottle of good wine, some beef, and—who could tell—perhaps a turkey. She grew so sanguine that already her cheeks flushed and her eyes sparkled with excitement.

She hastily donned her hat and jacket, tying a woollen cloud about her neck. She first went to a small store where she invested her last few pennies in a little wood and coal and a couple of candles; these she put away, saw her grandfather was still sleeping, then blew out the candle and closing the door softly after her, stepped out into the cold night. The snow had ceased falling but, in the isolated part of the city in which she lived there was such little traffic that there were no pathways beaten and Nellie was up to her knees at every step till she reached the principal streets. Here she met throngs of people hurrying along, some laden with Christmas toys for the little ones and nearly all with happy, smiling faces. Perhaps there was not one of the great multitude on whose shoulders rested a graver responsibility than on hers. When she reached Water Street she found that it was not nearly as cold and bleak as the other parts of the city, the wind seemed to have quite died out at last, and the heavy walking had overheated her so much that she removed the cloud from her neck and twined it around her arm. She hurried on until she came to a jewellers shop and standing outside the door for a moment she put up her hand to unfasten the brooch from her dress when, to her horror and amazement, she found that it was gone.

Nellie stood as if rooted to the spot. "Merciful Heaven," she cried, "take pity on me this night I've lost my brooch; oh, now I know I should not have tried to sell the diamond, it was wrong and this is my punishment; oh, what shall I do; where could I have dropped it?" She retraced her steps taking, as near as she could judge, the same paths as she had taken before, looking in vain, on the snowy ground and sometimes feeling with her hands until they pained her with the cold. She questioned the passers-by but no one had seen it. On she went till she came to the door of her home where she had to sit down to rest. "What, oh! what shall I do," she moaned wringing her hands. "I dare not go in grandfather may be awake and ask me where the brooch is, and how could I tell him that it is lost, I must find it" she cried. Springing up

with renewed energy, back she went over the dreary, tiresome road till she came again in front of the jeweller's shop, such a woe-begone little figure she looked with her sad, pale face bearing upon it traces of the misery which racked her heart. It was getting, late and the crowd was becoming somewhat thinner. She began to feel cold again but it did not occur to her to replace her cloud, every other thought was swallowed up in her great misfortune.

Just now a lady and gentleman, entered the store. What a pretty, smiling face the lady had, thought Nellie, as, in the midst of her grief, she watched them through the window, and the gentleman's countenance was a handsome, kindly one. They talked for a few moments to the proprietor of the store, and then Nellie saw her take a package from her purse and open it, laying it upon the counter. The jeweller took it up to examine it, in a second Nellie had darted into the shop crying, "My brooch, oh, thank God you have found it! Oh, you will give it to me I know for your face is honest and kind. Where did you pick it up?" the lady and gentleman looked puzzled.

"Of what are you speaking my dear little girl," said a sweet kind voice, "I did not pick up anything."

"I am speaking of my brooch which I lost about an hour ago and that is it," she said pointing to the brooch which the jeweller still held in his hand. "Oh, do not refuse to give it to me" said Nellie, with a burst of tears, "if you only knew what trouble it has caused me."

"But my dear, there must be some mistake, this is my own brooch, I did not pick it up, I've had it for years,"

"Take a good look at it, my dear," said the gentleman, "and you will find that it is not the one you lost but perhaps very much like it," and he handed it to her.

"Yes, yes," she cried excitedly, "it is the very one I lost, it is really mine."

Oh, no, you are laboring under a great mistake, my dear girl," said the lady in rather a dignified tone.

"If I tell you what is on the other side before I look at it will you believe me?" pleaded Nellie for she now firmly believed that the lady had picked it up and meant to keep it.

"Well," said the gentleman who had begun to feel much annoyed, "let us hear what is on the other side."

"Dark hair mixed with grey underneath a glass," answered Nelly promptly.

The lady and gentleman exchanged glances.

"Yes," replied the former, "that is precisely what is on the other side, look, but I am sorry for your sake that it is not the one you lost."

Several persons who had entered the shop began to gather round.

"You must please return the brooch," said the gentleman, "I'm sorry we cannot help you."

But poor Nellie, in her despair and desperation, still clung to her treasure.

"Oh, I am sure it is mine," she cried, "why will you not let me keep it?"

Just now a policeman stepped in.

"What is the trouble," he asked, "is the girl accusing you of taking something from her?"

The gentleman explained in a few words, saying in conclusion, "you must not be harsh with the poor child, she evidently believes it to be her's, but of course, she is making a mistake."

"I am making no mistake," answered Nellie. "My grandfather gave it to me to-night for a Christmas gift, it had belonged to my mother and he told me that there was but one other brooch like it and that was in possession of my aunt who lives ever so far away from Newfoundland."

"Your grandfather," repeated the lady excitedly, and she raised the girl's face in her hands, gazing fixedly at her. "Tell me who you are, child, and what is your grandfather's name?"

"Michael Dillon," answered Nellie, "and I am his eldest daughter's child, Nellie Dalton."

"Heaven be praised," ejaculated the lady fervently.

"And to-morrow morning we would have been gone," said the gentleman. "You must have been misinformed, Mary."

"It is all right," said the lady to the few who stood around, "I understand it now. Come," and she led the wondering Nellie from the store.

"My dear child," she said, when they got outside, "I am your aunt who has been away so long, and it is no wonder that you thought my brooch your own, for I have seen yours and it is the fac-simile of this one."

What took me to the jeweller's shop to-night was that the little hinge of the pin of mine had become loosened so that it

often falls out, and, as I always like to wear it, I thought I might get a pin put in it whilst I was waiting."

"This," she said, turning to the gentleman who accompanied them, "is my husband, he is a captain, and I am travelling with him. We only put in here this morning to escape the storm which was approaching. Take me to my father Nellie, little Nellie, who was such a wee toddler when I went away."

During the walk home, Nellie explained all to her, and about how her grandfather had given her the brooch that night as a Christmas gift, and of her reason for wishing to sell the diamond, and also of how the old man had prayed and longed so much to have his daughter with him on Christmas Eve.

"And what kept you so long without writing to us, Aunt Mary?" asked Nelly.

"Because, Nellie," she replied, "I believed both you and my father were dead. Some friends who left here at the time of the cholera and came to our place told me that the whole family had died with it, and I have been mourning you as dead, ever since."

"But," said Nellie, "I wonder why my grandfather's letters did not reach you?"

"Ah, that can be easily explained," her aunt replied. "My uncle died just before my marriage, and I left the place we were living in, and have been nearly ever since travelling with my husband."

As she drew near home the remembrance of Nellie's loss rushed back upon her, and she cried, "Oh, auntie, what am I to say to grandfather about the brooch, he will never forgive me."

"I am sure he will, my dear," said Captain Reynold, "for in the unexpected joy of seeing his long absent daughter, he will forget everything else."

"Of course," assents his wife. "Why, but for losing the brooch you would never have found me, as we intended leaving here to-morrow. But my dear," she continued, turning to her niece, "you are cold: why did you not put that cloud about your neck and shoulders, instead of round your arm?"

"I am in such trouble about my brooch that I quite forgot," Nellie answered.

"Let me put it round you now," said Mrs Reynold, and taking the cloud from the girl's arm she arranged it comfortably

about her neck. As she proceeded to tie it behind, she gave a little cry of pain.

"What is it dear?" her husband asked.

"Something sharp stuck in my hand," she answered.

"Oh, here it is in the fringe of your cloud, Nellie. It is something larger and heavier than a pin."

"Why!" she exclaimed in joyful astonishment.

"Just look, Nellie," and she held it before the girl's eyes.

Oh, wonder of wonders, and joy of joys, it was her brooch. In removing the cloud from her neck when the heavy walking had so overheated her, it must have become entangled in the wool and got disengaged from her dress. Nellie wept with joy at the recovery of her treasure.

When they came within sight of the house and Mary Reynold noted its poverty-stricken appearance, a wave of remorse rushed in a torrent upon her heart, as she remembered that whilst she was living in affluence her father had been in want of even the necessities of life, but, thank God, it need be so no longer.

Nellie opened the door quite noiselessly, and the three stepped into the darkened kitchen. She stole on tip-toe to the bedroom door and listened. Her grandfather was sleeping soundly. Of course they would not awaken him.

Nellie lit a candle, and in five minutes had a bright fire burning. They had decided that she should break the joyful news to the old man, gently, fearing that in his weakened state a sudden shock might be injurious to him.

After a short time he awoke. Nellie went to the bedside, the joy illuminating her countenance.

"You have had quite a long nap,—grandfather," she said.

"Yes, child," he answered, "and I have had such a happy dream too," he half sat up in bed. From a corner of the next room, unseen themselves, his daughter and her husband watched him.

"I dreamt," said Michael Dillon, "that I stood upon the Queen's Beach and saw a ship enter the Narrows, a good, big, brave ship. The fierce winds and waves swept her deck and rigging, but still she rode proudly on, battling the storm with giant strength. As she came nearer and approached her moorings it seemed to me that I recognized a form on deck. And Nellie, child, whose do you think it was?"

"Was it a man's or a woman's, grandfather?" she asked.

"A woman's, child," he replied, "it was my little girl who left me so long ago. I called to her. She heard me, and smiled back at me, waving her hands, 'I'm coming, father,' she cried, 'coming to you soon, very soon,' and then all faded away and I was standing on the lonely beach alone, but somehow the dream has made me feel happier for I believe she is coming to me, tho' God did not see fit to send her to me, for Christmas, still I know that in His own good time He will grant my prayer. But, Nellie, child, what makes you seem so happy and bright to-night, is it because 'tis Christmas, you look as tho' the joy of the Herald angels was reflected in your face?"

"I have a joyful story to tell you, grandfather," she answered, "you have told me a dream story but mine is a reality," and she began from the moment the idea first struck her of selling the diamond to that in which she had discovered her long absent aunt.

The old man grasped her tightly by the hand, his own shook with emotion as he gasped. "It really was my own little girl, and so she is married; ah, why did she not come to see her old father. Must I wait till to-morrow?"

"No, dear father, you must not for she is here now. Do you think I could wait till to-morrow, after having mourned you as dead for so long? It seems as if you were given back to me from the dead."

Nellie withdrew, and none but the angels witnessed the sacred meeting of father and daughter.

A short time elapsed, and then Mary Reynold came to the door and beckoned them to enter.

Capt. Reynold was warmly welcomed by the old man, and Nellie was proclaimed the heroine of the night.

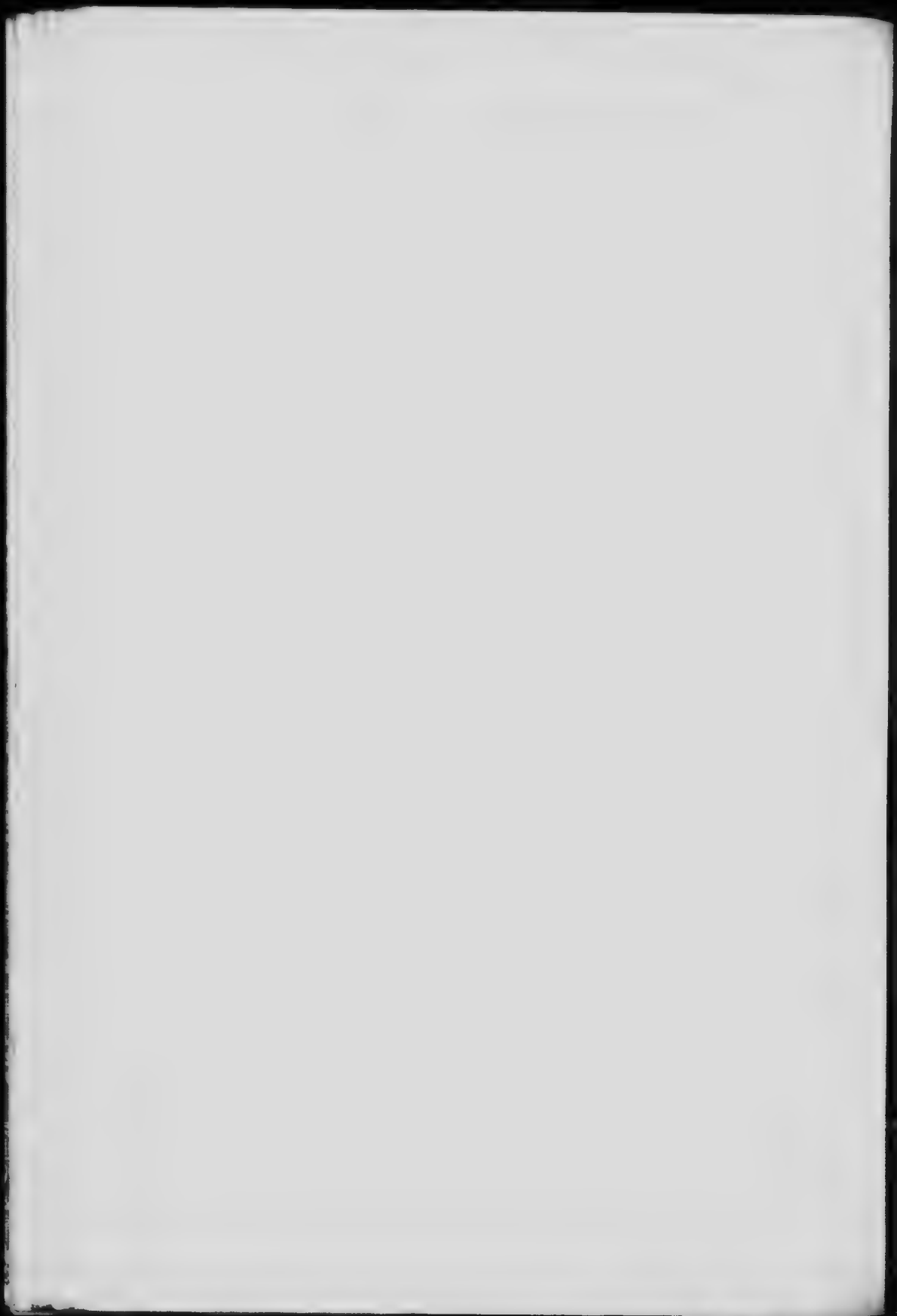
"Hark!" exclaimed Michael Dillon, holding up his hand, "there are the bells, 'tis Christmas morn, let us kneel and mingle with the Hosannas of the angels our thanks to Him, the Giver of all joy and peace, of all love and happiness."

Next day their plans were settled. Captain Reynold would wait till his wife's father was better, which would not be long now, that he had every care and nourishment which money could procure, and then he and Nellie would accompany them to their home in America.

"The price of the brooch, Nellie," said Michael Dillon, "shall henceforth be doubled in our eyes since it was the means of restoring my daughter to me."

"And," continued Captain Reynold, "when we get home we must have another precious stone set in it so as it can always be distinguished from my wife's, as

NELLIE'S LUCKY CHRISTMAS GIFT.



Thro' Adversity's Path.

CHAPTER I.

THE station of Port-aux-Basques was over-crowded, and amid the bustle and confusion which precedes the departure of the Bruce's train for St. John's, two ladies clad in deep mourning, were vainly trying to make their way thro' towards a second class car.

One was elderly, the other, quite a young girl with a pair of large, soft brown eyes.

The woman, who was the more timid of the two, seemed to depend on the girl for guidance, and followed where she led. Suddenly an exclamation of alarm escaped her, as the satchel she had been carrying, became detached from the chain, and in trying to recover it, she fell to the ground.

A little distance away, where the traffic was not so great, stood a lady with two young girls. They were accompanied by a handsome looking young gentleman of apparently twenty-five years. He had been attracted by the girl's face and was watching her when she fell. Comprehending her danger in a moment he rushed between her and the crowd, pushing them back with all the strength of his body, until he could stoop, and raise the girl to her feet.

She was uninjured, but had become pale from fright, and in reply to his question, as to whether she were hurt or not, she gave an assuring little smile, thanking him gracefully, and saying, "I should have made sure of a firmer footing

before I stooped to secure the satchel, but I could not risk losing it, as it contains all our money."

He was now assisting them on the car. "I fear it would not take long to lose it in a crowd like this," answered her protector, Fred Clyne. "You are fortunate in getting off without sustaining any injury. This lady has, I fear, received a great shock," and he turned with a smile to the elder woman, who was still trembling.

"Mother is always nervous in a crowd," explained the girl, "but we are all right now, and thank you ever so much for your timely assistance."

"You must allow me to see you safely to your seats," answered Fred, "and if there is any other little service I can render you, I should be most happy to do so. Are you going all the way?"

"Yes, right to St. John's."

"Then we are bound for the same place. I shall see you again, I trust, before we reach there," and he seemed inclined to linger without any apparent necessity for doing so.

"Where has Fred taken himself off in such a hurry?" asked Mrs Faulkner, the mother of the two girls before alluded to.

"To the rescue of beauty in distress to be sure," answered Ida, the younger of the two, with a slight sneer. "Did you not see him watching that rather pretty American girl, for the past ten minutes. I believe he was glad she fell, so as to give him an opportunity of going to her aid."

"Nonsense," answered Maud, her sister, "they are only travelling second-class, and he would not want to know them."

"They," repeated Mrs Faulkner, "are there two of them?"

"Mother and daughter, I should imagine," replied Maud. "There they are, he is helping them on the car now."

Mrs Faulkner looked in the direction indicated; the lady had thrown back her veil, and her face being turned in their direction, they got a full view of it.

"Is it ever possible?" ejaculated Mrs Faulkner, "and the other one, of course, must be the daughter for she is the very image of what the mother was when she went away; she has come, after all these years, to get what she can from James Faulkner. They are evidently poor too or they would not be travelling second-class."

This was said more to herself than to the girls who were listening in amazement. "Look," she went on excitedly turn-

ing to her daughters, "look well at these women so that you will know them again."

The girls obeyed wonderingly.

"Do you know who they are?" she continued, "they are the daughter and granddaughter of my husband, your stepfather. And should they meet him, they are likely to inherit all the fortune which otherwise I believe will be yours."

"The daughter and granddaughter of our stepfather," echoed the two girls. "Why we never knew he had a daughter."

"He has," answered their mother, "I knew her before she left here, she married against his wishes and he never forgave her. Her husband was an American and when going away shortly after their marriage they went to bid her father good-bye, he refused to see them, and I know that she is not even mentioned in his will. He does not speak of her; but more than once, I have caught him looking at her picture, and one day, he said to me, that he would like to know if she were well and happy, so that I suspect his heart is beginning to relent towards her, and now if they meet, farewell to all your expectations of a fortune."

"And a handsome husband too, perhaps," put in Ida spitefully, for Maud, the older and handsomer of the two, was supposed to be the one favored by Fred, and not a small amount of jealousy burned in her heart towards her sister.

"We must keep them apart," said Mrs Faulkener, "now that he is ill and confined to his room it can be easily done. We must be on the watch and if either of these women come to the house they are not to be brought to him, neither is there to be any message taken. The husband must be dead as she is in widow's dress and must have left them in poor circumstances, with all the talk people had of his being immensely rich, or they would not be travelling second class. Of course, we will not see them in want. After your stepfather's death—for I know he cannot live much longer—we can help them along and that will be fair enough," and she tried to make her conscience echo her words. "And now I must tell you something which I only learned recently. Of course you know Fred Clyde is the son of your step-father's dearest friend, who when he was dying, begged my husband to look after his boy, which he has done faithfully and thinks as much of him as if he were a son of his own, and has willed his property, and a large

share of his money to him, but he also wishes that Fred will marry one of you, and, I think Maud, my dear, that you will be the chosen one. so that you can both see how important it is that these women, Mr Faulkener, and Fred Clyne be kept apart."

CHAPTER II.

It is about a month later and one week before Christmas that Fred Clyne entered the house of Mrs Carlton, a favourite cousin of his. He found that lady at home and delighted to see him. They sat near the window talking for some time, presently Mrs Carlton said:

"Fred, are you looking for anyone, or are you developing a great interest in pretty girls?"

Fred looked up quickly seeming a trifle guilty.

"Why do you ask?" he said.

"Because every girl who passed since we sat here you watched closely till she was out of sight, the pretty ones in particular. What would Maud Viveen say if she saw you?"

"What should it matter to her?"

"Why? well, everybody thinks it should and what everybody thinks and says must be true."

"What everybody thinks and says is, very often, most untrue, and, if you mean that there is anything serious between Maud and myself everyone is entirely mistaken. I know what has given rise to it, it is the fact of my meeting them at Port-aux-Basques, when they were returning from their visit to Halifax. Mrs Faulkener wrote, requesting her husband to ask me to do so, and I did not like to refuse, but Maud knows as well as I do that we are only friends."

"Maud does not always say so," thought Mrs Carlton. She was acquainted with the Miss Viveens and their mother but they were not favourites of hers.

"Did you ever have a romance in your life, Fred?" she asked.

"Yes, one," he answered, slowly, with a dreamy smile.

"You had, you sly monkey, and you never told me of it."

"Well, it's never too late to do good. I'll tell you, now, Kitty, if you don't mind."

"You know I shall only be too delighted to listen." And he gave her an account of the incident at Port-aux-Basques.

"And you have not seen her since?" she asked.

"Yes, once, while we were at Whitbourne I saw the young lady and I had fully made up my mind to find out her name and address when we got here but Mrs Faulkener kept me fussing about her so much that when I came to look for them they had gone and that ended my romance, I have not since seen mother or daughter."

It had now become dusk, the blinds were lowered and they withdrew to the fire. Presently as Fred arose to go there was a ring at the dor-bell and a servant announced,—

"The young lady, about the fancy work, Mrs Carlton."

"Oh, yes, I've been expecting her, show her in here please."

"Well, I'll be wishing you good evening, Kitty and"—but the sentence was never finished, for there, standing in the door-way, was she, who for the past few weeks had filled his thoughts and haunted his slumbers. Both were spell-bound for a moment, and Mrs Carlton, taking in the situation at a glance, said: "Good evening Miss Barton. Allow me to introduce my cousin, Fred Clyne; Miss Barton, Fred, a young lady whom I have had the pleasure of meeting recently." Then smilingly she made some slight apology and considerably withdrew for a short time.

"This is indeed an unexpected pleasure, Miss Barton," said Fred, holding her hand a little longer than etiquette allowed. "Where did you hide yourself after the arrival of the train that day. I intended to request your mother, if she would be kind enough to give me her name and address, and to ask if I could be of any assistance to you, and tho' I waited till the last passenger had left I could see no trace of you."

"I can assure you, Mr Clyne we were not trying to hide ourselves," answered Rita Barton smiling brightly, "but we could not have given you our address, for, at that time, we did not know where it would be."

"Ah! you have no friends here."

"No," she answered, and for a moment the bright, smiling face hardened and grew cold, "We have no friends."

"All the more reason why I should have been there to direct you. I trust that you are quite comfortable, and that Mrs Barton is well."

"We are quite comfortable thank you, but mother is not well, she has met with a great disappointment since we came here and it has upset her," but it suddenly occurred to her that she was becoming rather confidential to a mere acquaintance and her manner changed. She became quite serious and reserved, she remembered too, that she was only there to receive her much needed payment for the work which she now carried under her arm. At this moment, Mrs Carlton entered, and, as Fred knew that business was to be transacted, there was nothing left for him but to take his departure, only going however, to the next room till after Miss Barton had gone. He would have liked to accompany her, only he feared she would think he was presuming on so short an acquaintance.

Mrs Carlton smiled when he returned to the drawing-room. "Ah! I thought you had not gone far, so this is the object of your search for the past weeks. Well, I'm not surprised. She is a sweet girl, besides being pretty."

"Tell me all you know of her Kitty," he said. "How lucky that I came in here this evening."

"Ah, Fred, yours is a bad case I fear. Well, what I know of her is very little, but you're welcome to it. This much I know, that she is a lady, poor and proud, and not accustomed to selling fancy work. Two weeks ago I went to call upon a friend, and whilst there a servant came to say that a lady wished to exhibit some very rare fancy work with a view to disposing of it, and Miss Barton was brought in.

We looked at the work, which was most beautiful in its artistic design. Much to her discredit, my friend refused to purchase a single article. I noticed that the girl seemed to shrink from observation, and her face flushed proudly, as some slighting remark was made in reference to her work. And then, also, I noticed a look of keen disappointment pass over her face when she was told to call another time. I immediately asked the price of what work she then had. She named a very modest sum and I purchased the whole. I was rewarded by an eloquent look of gratitude from those sweet brown eyes of hers, which won my heart completely. I gave her my address and requested her to call next day when I would give her an order for more work. Well, she came; I had quite a chat with her. She told me that she and her mother were alone, that they had come to Newfoundland a few weeks before, and had

met with a great disappointment, and that now she had to support herself and her mother, by the sale of her own work. Well, to-day she brought the cushions and things which I had engaged from her that day, and there you have the whole story."

Fred's face wore a look of deep perplexity, then he said:

"It is hard indeed if they have no other means of living than this; has she any more work to sell?"

"I do not know, but at any rate she could have some ready in a few days if she were sure of disposing of it."

"Kitty, will you engage all she can possibly have ready, say for this day week, that will be Christmas Eve, and I will take it all. Make her name a good price; I will give you the money and, of course, she need not know who has engaged it. Tell her it is someone who requires the work for Christmas."

"Certainly, Fred, I shall be glad to do it, but I must call upon her as I may not see her again for some time; I know where she lives."

"Call to-night and let me go with you."

"Stupid, as if she would not then suspect who the would-be purchaser is and feel indignant, deeming us guilty of offering her charity. No, Fred, you must curb your impatience and wait till to-morrow evening when I can pretend some lady, who is soon to be married, was looking at her work and greatly admired it, and wished to purchase quite a lot for her new home."

"Wait until it's quite dark," said Fred, "so that you can have an excuse for my escort." So it was arranged that he would call for Mrs Carlton next evening at seven.

CHAPTER III.

It is past seven on the following evening. Mrs Barton and Rita are sitting near a very low fire, the room is bare and small but neat and clean, one of the cheapest lodgings they could find. There is only the fire light in the room, as they cannot afford to light the lamp yet, for the oil must last a week. Mrs Barton looks pale and spiritless.

"Ah, Rita, my dear," she was saying. "If we were only back in our home again. When I think of the trouble I have brought on you by my perseverance. If I had listened to you I should never have come."

"Hush, mother dear, do not worry over it, in another few months I trust we shall have enough saved to return home. You thought you were doing the wisest thing. How could you know that grandfather would be so hard and unforgiving as to refuse to see his own child when she went to him after twenty years of absence. Ah! mother, how unlike you he must be, and all because you married my dear and honored father."

"I have not deserved this treatment from him, his only objection to your father was that he was going away from here and he wished him to go alone and return in a year for me but neither of us could bear the separation and then he told us that he would never forgive us and he is keeping his word, but I felt sure when I sent word that I was a widow with a daughter and no means of support that he would take us to his heart and home; and then to see those girls, his wife's daughters, living in luxury in the house that should be ours and we actually in need of the necessities of life, oh, what an injustice."

"Forget all about them, mother dear. We will be happy when we get back to our own home where I shall get a nice situation and we can live comfortably again."

A knock was heard and Rita hastened to light the lamp ere she opened the door to admit, to her surprise, Mrs Carlton and Fred Clyne. Mrs Barton was much pleased to see Fred, and

felt charmed with Mrs Carlton, who, after speaking with her for a few minutes, withdrew to a far corner where she held a conversation with Rita in a very low tone. After this she had quite a long chat with Mrs Barton, and Fred improved his opportunity by having a talk with Rita and left the house more in love with her than he himself knew.

CHAPTER IV.

It is Christmas Eve night, the hour eight o'clock. It has been fine with a little frost all day, but now some fine flakes of snow were beginning to fall and the wind had an ominous sound as it whistled round the corners of the house and found its way through chinks and holes into the room where Rita Barton sat putting the finishing touches to her last piece of work.

"Rita, child," said her mother, "you are staying too long, you should have gone while you had daylight and left some of the work till next week."

"I have finished the last stitch now, mother, and see what a lot of money I shall have when I return, if I did not have it all done we could not pay our rent to-night as we promised."

"It breaks my heart, Rita, to think of you having to do this; you, who never knew hardship except by name."

"As long as I keep the wolf from the door and lay by a little towards going home, mother, dear, I am satisfied. I am young and strong and will get through alright,"—and hastily dressing for the street she started on her journey. She felt thankful when she arrived at Mrs Carlton's, for the wind was icy cold, and the snow falling faster, but what was her disappointment when she was informed that Mrs Carlton was out.

"Did she leave any message?" asked Rita.

"No," answered the girl, "she left no message, Miss. and I do not expect her home before ten."

It now struck Rita that, perhaps, she was supposed to take the work to the person for whom it was intended, and Mrs Carlton may have forgotten to give her the address. She was in such desperate need of the money, that she ventured to tell the girl, that a lady, through Mrs Carlton had engaged some work from her, and asked her if she knew anything of it and where the person lived."

"Oh, yes, I think I can tell you," said the girl, as she smiled knowingly "It is for Miss Viveen who is to be married to Mrs

Carlton's cousin, Mr Clyne, but oh, Miss, she lives almost in the country and you'd never go there to-night."

The words fell with a chill on Rita's heart. He was to be married, and the words he had spoken to her when last they met were almost a declaration of love, and he had won her permission to call upon her on Christmas Day. How dared he so trifle with her; and she had been for days to work upon fancy decorations which were to adorn his home. For a moment she resolved to take the work back; Miss Viveen should never enjoy it; but with a sudden sinking of her sorely tried heart she remembered the dire necessity in which she was placed. If it were only herself was concerned she would starve first, but her mother was in need and the rent must be paid that night, and, she told herself, beggars cannot be choosers. As well as she could, she got directions from the girl what way to go and, with grim determination, started for Miss Viveen's.

When she reached the city limits the way was dark and lonely. It was only one out of a hundred who would have gone on, the ninety-nine would have turned back and given up in despair, but Rita was naturally brave and energetic. Covered with snow and chilled with the icy blast she pressed onward, but more keenly than that of wind or snow did the cold chill of disappointment strike at her heart and several times she had to do fierce battle with her proud, rebellious spirit when the remembrance of the humiliating task she was forced to perform came over her.

It now occurred to her that the name Viveen was not unfamiliar, she had a vague idea of its being connected with her in some painful manner and the road too began to seem familiar. Suddenly she remembered that it was the same one her mother had taken when they went to see her grandfather, the man who had treated them with such cruel injustice. Another few moments and she stood motionless on the road, as a firm conviction flashed upon her.

"Oh, God of Bethlehem," she cried, turning her eyes toward the snow-obscured heavens, from which no friendly light of moon or stars shone down upon her lonely path. "have pity upon me this night and give me strength to do my duty. It is to my grandfather's house I am going; Viveen is the name of his wife's daughter." Then she reflected, her business was with them; she did not want anything from the man who would not allow them over the threshold, she only wanted payment

for her work so that she could hasten back to her mother, who, no doubt, was quite anxious by this time over her prolonged absence.

Cold, and wearied out with conflicting emotions, she at last reached the house. She recognized it both by having seen it before and also from the direction Mrs Carlton's servant had given her as to its situation. Her heart beat furiously as she rang the bell.

The door was opened very gently by an old woman who stared aghast as she viewed the snow-covered figure. She drew her inside, immediately closing the door, and to Rita's enquiry answered that the Miss Viveens with their mother were out with a party of friends at Manuels, and the train by which they were returning was not due till after ten.

A deep sigh escaped her. Was she to meet with disappointment wherever she turned?

The woman noticed the tired, weary expression of the sweet, young face and Rita felt so crushed in spirit that she allowed her to remove her hat and coat, brush the snow from her face and hair and lead her to a warm bright room.

"You must rest, my dear," she said, in a low voice, "before you venture out on the road again, you look worn out."

"Thank you so much," said Rita, smiling gratefully, "but indeed, it is scarcely worth while removing my things as I must be on the road again before it gets late: it is dark and lonely and I am a stranger here."

The woman had fixed her eyes upon Rita's face with a strange intent gaze. The kindness of her manner brought tears to the girl's eyes and some impulse made her say,

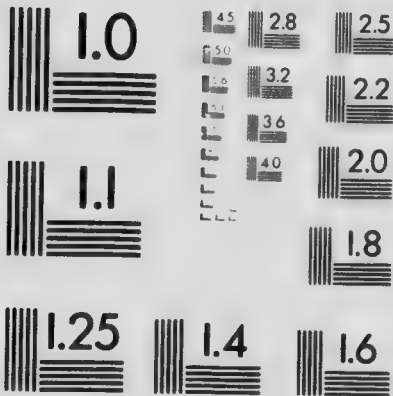
"I suppose you will be surprised when I tell you that I am Rita Barton, the grand-daughter of Mr. Faulkener, and I am here to be paid for this work," pointing to the parcel which she had placed upon a chair, "which was engaged by Miss Viveen."

"Rita Barton," repeated the woman, a joyous light coming into her eyes as she clasped the girl's hands in her's. "No, my dear, not altogether surprised, for ever since you came, I have been wondering who you are, with the face and form of Rita Faulkener; but oh, my child, why is it that you come like this to the house that should be your own? Where and how, is your dear mother? You may tell me everything, my child, for I am an old friend of your family. I nursed your mother when she was a baby. She went away after her



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marriage, and we have never heard a word from her since. Your grandfather, never forgave her for marrying against his wishes, but I believe, that now he would be glad to see her if possible?"

Rita gave the history of the past few months of her life to the old nurse who listened attentively and grew indignant when she heard that they would not be received in the house that should be their home.

"Who took your message?" she asked.

"A servant," answered Rita. "When grandfather refused to see her, mother sent up her card with a few words written in pencil upon it, these were the words:

"Dear Father, I have come back to you, a widow. My husband, about a year ago, lost a large fortune in foolish speculation, and he died soon after, a broken-hearted man, leaving me and our one daughter unprovided for. Will you forgive me for her sake.

Your loving daughter,

RITA."

"Strange, strange," muttered the old woman, "surely they would not be bad enough"—and then she stopped. "Child, since his illness he has spoken of your mother often."

"Why, is he ill?" asked Rita.

"My dear, he is dying, his illness accounts for my presence in the house. I came to nurse him."

"He is dying," repeated Rita, "and yet his wife and her daughters can be out enjoying themselves."

"Ah, my dear, they do not mind, but at any rate he did not seem any worse than usual until late this evening when he took a sudden and unexpected change and the doctor thinks he will not live longer than to-morrow."

"Dying!" a sudden revulsion of feeling came over Rita, a great feeling of pity filled her heart for the lonely old man whose wife could go and amuse herself when her place should be at his bedside, and she thought if she could but see him and take to her mother his love and forgiveness, what a blessed thing it would be; he could not refuse it this night of all others, the night of love and forgiveness, of 'peace and good-will.'

"Could it be possible for me to see my grandfather?" she asked.

"Certainly, my dear," answered the nurse. "Who has a

better right to see him? He is quite rational and in possession of all his faculties. I am sure, child, there is some great mistake about that message of your mother's, for he really does not know you are in Newfoundland."

"Then if he does not, he has never received it," said Rita.

The woman led her to the door of her grandfather's room, it was partly open. "There is someone with him," she said, "it is a young friend of his. He will not remain long; just sit here, my dear," placing a chair outside the door for her, "and when he comes out you go right in, he won't have much difficulty in recognizing you for you are the living image of your mother. I must go now to the kitchen to prepare a drink for him, I was on my way there when I heard your ring at the door." She went, and Rita, her heart beating painfully, sat down to wait till her grandfather was alone.

Presently, a voice which sounded painfully familiar to her said, "you seem much easier than you did two hours ago, Mr Faulkener."

"Yes, Fred, and but for one thing I should die happily; one injustice of which I have been guilty. I had a daughter once, you know of her, Fred."

"Yes, sir, you have been estranged since her marriage, twenty years ago. It is only recently I learned of it from Mrs Carlton. She has never written you since she left here."

"She has once, and I returned her letter unopened, That was one year after her marriage; of course she did not write me again. I refused to see either her or her husband when going away, and all for a selfish whim, because I did not wish her to go. I said I would never forgive her, but I have forgiven her, and long with all my heart to see her once before I die. I do not know in what part of the world she is now, or I would have written long ago, but it is a just punishment to me that I must die with the greatest desire of my heart unfulfilled. Her husband was a wealthy man, so I know she is alright in that respect; whether there are any children I do not know. My will was made some years ago when my heart was bitter towards her, but within the last few weeks I have changed it and left my daughter a share of my fortune. My wife does not know of the alteration. You, Fred, I have always looked upon as a son and loved you as such. This house and all it contains is yours; I shall leave my wife and her youngest daughter

well provided for, and you will marry Maud, soon, will you not, Fred?"

"Marry Maud," repeated the young man.

"Yes," answered Mr Faulkener. "She is a nice girl, I think, is she not?"

"Certainly, sir, she is, and I thank you for all your long kindness to me. You have, indeed, been as my father, but I cannot marry Miss Viven. Leave her the house and not to me, Mr Faulkener, I can make my way in the world."

"Why could you not marry her?" demanded the dying man, whose greatest fault was that he always wanted to bend others to his will. "Is there anyone else?"

"Yes, sir, there is,"—and he gave the history, which the reader already knows, of his few meetings with Rita. "And," he added in conclusion, "I am to call upon her to-morrow when I hope to win her promise to be my wife."

"What is her name?" asked Mr Faulkener.

"Rita Barton," answered Fred.

"Rita Barton," murmured the old man. "Rita is my daughter's name, and she married a man named Barton; how strange."

Rita could control herself no longer; she knew enough. She gave a timid little knock at the door.

It was opened by Fred, who gave an exclamation of joyous surprise. Rita threw herself on her knees, by the bedside, crying, "Grandfather, I am Rita Barton, your Rita's child."

CHAPTER V.

When Mr Faulkener grew calm after this bewildering announcement, and was convinced that it was really his daughter's child who knelt by his bedside, explanations followed. The girl who had taken Mrs Barton's card, was summoned and stated that, by Mrs Faulkener's orders, she returned the card to Mrs Barton, without bringing it to her father, and was forbidden, ever to speak of it to anyone. When Mr Faulkener heard this, he told Fred to go immediately and bring his daughter to him, also his lawyer.

It was discovered afterwards, how the mistake which brought Rita to her grandfather's house arose. Mrs Carlton had on that night, with her usual kindness of heart, taken the money herself to Rita's house, thinking it might be late when the work was done; and when she arrived there Rita had left it.

On the night when she and Fred Clyne had gone to Rita's house to engage the work, the girl who had been the means of sending her to Miss Viveen, asked Mrs Carlton for Miss Barton's address, as she wished to engage some pretty collars from her, which she had seen amongst her work. She was just in the act of going out with Fred, and she answered, "Miss Barton won't have time for anything like that for the next week. I am going to leave her a large order now, for work to be done by Christmas Eve for a lady who is soon to be married," and the girl, noticed a smile pass between Mrs Carlton and Fred, and having heard the rumor, about him and Maud Viveen, drew her own conclusion, and thought she was quite safe in sending Rita there.

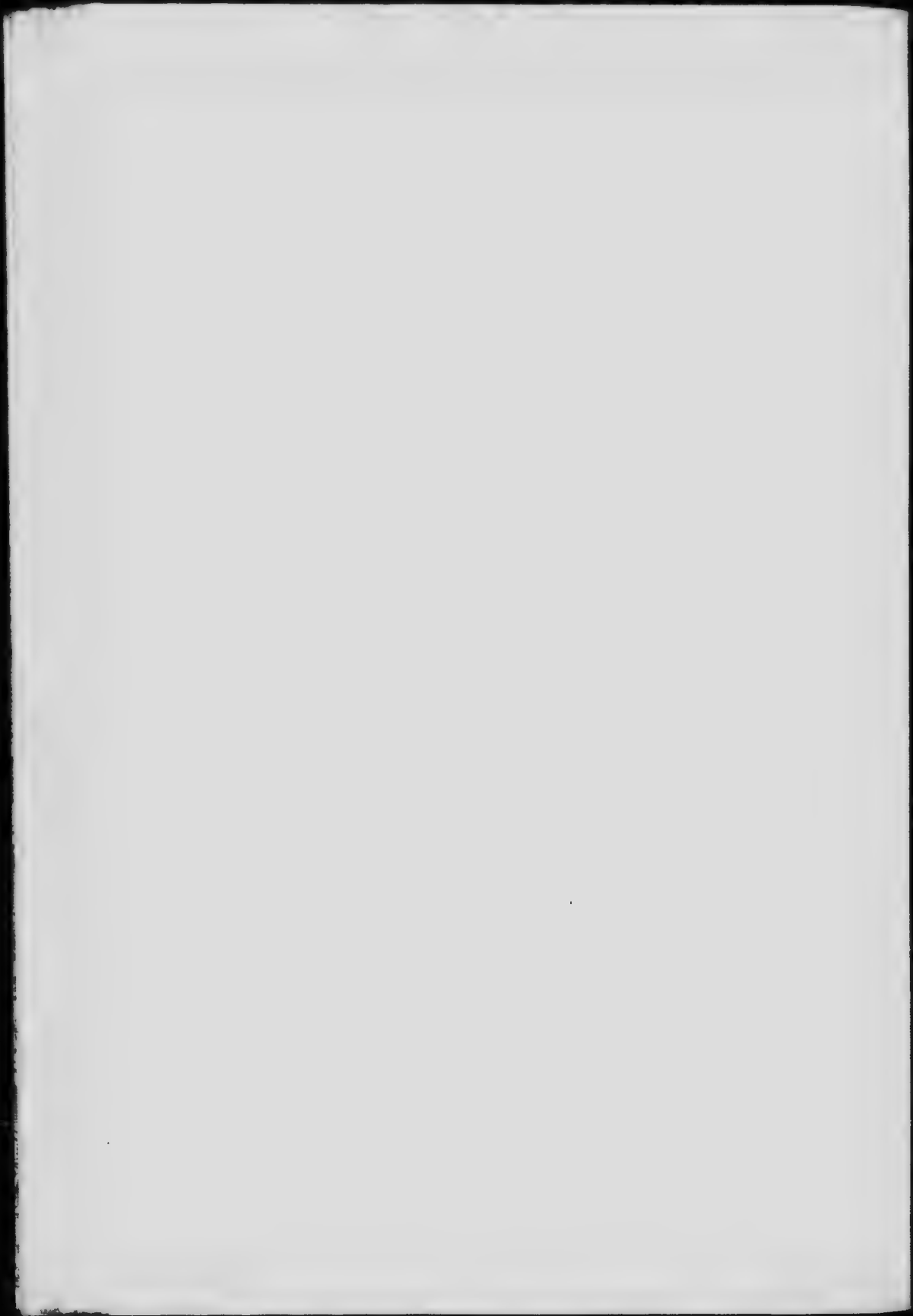
Rita met her mother in the hall-way of her old home. They embraced in silence, and together they entered the presence of the dying man. Half an hour passed, and the lawyer was then summoned. When the business was settled everyone was excluded from the room except Mrs Barton, Rita, and Fred. The end seemed to be coming sooner than anyone had thought, perhaps the excitement of the past two hours had hastened it on.

At eleven o'clock, his wife and her daughters arrived and went to the sick room. What was their amazement, humiliation, and chagrin at the scene which met their gaze, Mrs Barton holding her father's hand on one side, and Rita and Fred, bending over him on the other. The dying man opened his eyes, and looked at them, then raising his hand as if to keep them off, he said, "Go," and he pointed to the door, "I know all, but as I am dying, and this is the night of peace, and love, and good will I forgive you, but leave me now, I want none but my loved ones near me," and they wisely retreated from the room.

A prayer of thankfulness went up from Rita's heart, when she realized that, even though it was through adversity's path, she was the means of bringing her mother to her dying parent's bedside.

When the bells rang the midnight hour, and the Herald Angels were singing Hosannas to the new-born King, the Angel of Death entered the room, and ere the last sound died away on the frost-laden air, the soul of James Faulkener, was borne away to participate in the joy that reigns in the Heavenly Court, the joy that is greater than any other, "For Behold, This Hour A Saviour Is Born Unto Men."

THE END.



The Story of a Torn Letter.

CHAPTER I.

THE scene is a wild, bleak sea-coast of a small village, in a part of Newfoundland; rendered wilder and bleaker to-night by the storm which has raged for some hours. The rain is pouring in torrents, the lightning flashes, and the thunder rolls. On the beach close to the sea a young man stands, watching a small steamer which is soon to bear him away. He is drenched with the falling rain, but he scarcely knows it, and his handsome face wears an expression of fierce indignation. Hearing the sound of footsteps behind him he turns, and a flash of lightning reveals the face and form of a young girl wrapped in a shawl. He started eagerly forward, clasping his arm about her, as if to shield her from the storm.

"Oh, Mollie, my dear little girl," he cried, "why have you come out on such a terrible night. You're soaking wet. You will catch your death of cold."

"Do you think I could let you go without bidding you farewell, without telling you that I know you are innocent. What care I for storm and rain now; ah, it seems as if God's vengeance is making itself felt, and the guilty wretch for whom you are suffering may be struck dead to-night from one of these terrific flashes of lightning."

"And you believe in my innocence still, Mollie, even tho' the money was found in my pocket?"

"Yes, yes, Jack, a thousand times yes. I never for a moment doubted you. Oh! I did not think my grandfather could be so hard-hearted, and oh, must you go Jack? Must you leave Newfoundland altogether?"

I must, Mollie. Not because I have any fear for myself, but for my mother's sake; it would break her heart to have me charged with such a crime. I have been wild and reckless and given her trouble enough, but God knows I have never been dishonest. I must leave the village to-night, and St. John's at the first opportunity, or he will prosecute me, and you know that he will keep his word."

"Yes, he will keep his word, and oh, to think that I and my sister must live with him after this."

"You cannot help that, Mollie, he is your only protector and he believes me guilty. He is aware of our attachment too, and that is another reason he has for forcing me to leave the country. He has forbidden me to write to you but in that I will please myself, unless you tell me not."

Tell you not, oh, how can you say this, Jack, when it is all I shall have to live for."

"Then I will write and you shall answer me."

"Certainly I will, even if he forbade me a thousand times to do so."

"Ah, I wonder if we shall ever meet again, little one?" as he brushed back the wet hair from her face.

"Perhaps I may only spoil your life if I ask you to wait till I can send for you, perhaps you may marry some other fellow far better than I."

"Never," answered the girl, looking up earnestly into his face. "I shall never marry any man but you, and I shall wait till you send for me even though it be ten, aye, twenty years, and I shall trust you even through years of silence."

"Darling, I am not worthy of such faith and devotion, but I will try to be."

"Of course," and she looked at him anxiously, her voice shaking with emotion. "Should you learn to love another better than me all you need do is to tell me, but that would make no difference with me. I should be faithful to your memory just the same."

"I never shall, Mollie, I would be just as faithful to your memory even though you were dead. Oh, if I could but stay to try and find the guilty person and prove my innocence, but he has left me no alternative. I must only trust in God."

"I will prove it, Jack, I will devote my life to the task, and when I find the thief, as sure as the thunder rolls, and the lightning flashes, to-night, I shall bring him to justice, no matter

who he is. I have a clue," she went on hurriedly. "I went into grandfather's room, after you had left the house, to have a look around, and near the drawer from which the money was taken, I picked up this," and she took from her pocket half of a letter; it had been torn across and the upper part was gone so that no one could tell where it was written from, or to whom. It was just an ordinary letter with no name mentioned through it, only "your friend Ned" at the bottom. "If I could only find the rest of that letter, I would know who took grandfather's hundred pounds from the drawer."

He looked at it but it was too dark to read it and she told him the contents.

"Do not build too much on that," Mollie, he said. "perhaps it was not the person who took the money dropped it at all."

"I feel sure it was," answered the girl. "I'll say nothing to anyone about it for the present."

The steamer's whistle sounded out loud and shrill through the storm. Sobs and tears shook the girl's slight frame, and so these two, the victims of a cruel wrong, tasted in their parting, one of life's bitterest sorrows.

CHAPTER II.

It is Christmas Eve, twenty years later. Mollie Maxwell and her sister Bessie, still live in the same home with the addition of Bessie's husband, Tom Blake, the cousin of poor Jack. Mr Maxwell, in dying, left his business to his granddaughters, to be managed for them by Tom, who was content to leave his home in town, and settle down in a small, but thriving village.

It is near dusk and a snow storm is raging. Bessie and Tom Blake are sitting near the fire in a cosy parlor when Mollie enters. Her face, is still youthful looking and pretty, but the suppressed feeling, the anxiety and watching of all these years, have robbed her cheeks of their bloom.

She seems greatly excited, and there is a gleam in her dark eyes which bodes ill to someone. She glances at her companions as though she were about to say something, then, goes out into the hallway.

Presently, there falls upon their ears a sound, the meaning of which, is well known by the inhabitants of a sea coast village.

"That is like the sound of guns at sea," said Tom Blake.

"No," answered Bessie, "'tis the noise of men stamping the snow from their feet in the neighbouring houses."

"I'm afraid not," he answered.

"I must see to the filling of the children's stockings," said Mrs Blake, and she went up stairs.

Molly entered hurriedly, going towards Tom, holding in her hand a torn letter.

"So," she said, "after years, Tom Blake, I have discovered who put the money in Jack's pocket that night when my grandfather accused him of robbery. I have discovered who was the snake in the grass, the double-dyed thief, who not only steals money, but the honest name of his friend and kinsman, and to think that my sister must call you husband, her children call you father! I swore to him that whenever I discovered the

thief I would bring him to justice whoever he was, and I'll keep my word."

Tom Blake had risen to his feet, his face white as death.

"Mollie, what do you mean," he gasped, "of what do you accuse me? What will you tell my wife?"

"I will recall to her memory a summer nearly twenty years ago, when you and Jack Blake came to spend a month in this village. I will remind her of the night we had given a party in this house, you and Jack being amongst the guests, the night my grandfather's money was stolen, and he was guilty of the shameful act of having every man in the house searched. The money was found in Jack's pocket. Going to my grandfather's room afterwards, I picked up this from the floor, and I always said, and believed that wherever I found the other half of this letter, I would find the thief. "This evening, my sister asked me to look up a missing receipt which you badly needed. She gave me the key of an old trunk, in which she thought it might likely be. I found it, but, I also found this, the other half of that letter. Your name is at the heading; it belongs to you, and you dropped it that night in my grandfather's room, and in picking it up you tore it, and left behind, as you little thought, a legacy which after all this time betrays your guilt."

At sight of the letter, Tom Blake fell back and covered his face with his hands, Mollie stood over him like an avenging Nemesis.

"I might deny it," he said, "that letter would not condemn me, but I will not. You know, Mollie, how I loved you in the past, and that night, seeing Jack victorious, I grew frantic with jealousy. What took me to your grandfather's room was that it overlooked a part of the grounds where I thought you and Jack were walking. It was just before the thunder storm came on and I wanted to make sure whether you were there or not. Strange to say, the drawer was open, and looking in I saw the money. The diabolical thought entered my mind that if I could put the money in something belonging to him, he would be accused of stealing it and you and he might be separated. As I was hesitating, I saw you both pass, arm in arm, under the window. This decided me. I took the money and pulled out my handkerchief to place over it, when that letter fell out,—it was from a friend of mine in St. John's. Unknown to myself my foot must have been on it for, when I took it hurriedly from the floor, it tore. I did not know this until I

came to look at it afterwards and saw that I had only half the letter. I had no difficulty in slipping the money into Jack's pocket, but, will you believe me, when I tell you that, many a time since I would have given years of my life to undo the deed? I have shed bitter tears over it."

"All is of no avail now," answered Molly, "justice shall be done to his memory. Am I also indebted to you for the stealing of his letters to me, for I know he must have written?"

"No, your grandfather saw to that. I believe that poor Jack is dead, Mollie, and if he could speak to you now he would tell you—in honour of this blessed night—to let peace and forgiveness enter your heart. What good would it do us all, to have you tell my wife of my crime? She is as dear, nay, dearer to me now, than you once were, and I beg of you not to say anything which would turn her heart against me."

"Coward," she cried, "you must bear the penalty of your sin. I shall not spare you. When I think of him, exiled from his home and friends, sent, perhaps, to his death, whilst you thrived and prospered, it makes me feel as though I could kill you. I'll show you no pity, no mercy. This night my sister shall learn the kind of man her husband is, and I shall take steps to clear Jack Blake's name before all those who have believed in his guilt."

The door burst open and two men, out of breath and covered with drift, rushed into the room. "For God's sake, Blake," said one, "lend a hand, we want every man we can get. There is a steamer ashore on the rocks; her boats are all swept away, and she will soon go to pieces. We must try and get our skiffs out and save as many of the poor creatures as we can. Their cries for help are heartrending."

"Go," said Tom Blake, "I will follow."

When the men had gone he turned to Mollie, and said:

"You have called me a coward, I will prove that I am not one. I'll save every creature on that ship or perish in the attempt, and better, yes, far better, that I should die, for then, perhaps, you might show to my wife and children the mercy you deny to me. At least spare my memory, it will do them no good to learn of my guilt, it is the night of love and mercy, and one cannot do more than to give his life," and he went out.

Mollie had not spoken a word all this time. Nearly an hour had passed, and now, remorse began to take possession of her. She could hear her sister moving about upstairs in

blissful ignorance of all that was happening. What if, through her, she should to-night be widowed, and her children fatherless? He had said it was the night of love and mercy and of forgiveness too. Had she been found wanting? Could she remain inactive there, whilst danger and shipwreck were close at hand? No. She caught up a cloak, who knew but she might be some help? True she was only a woman, but a woman with a brave heart and willing hands, and, yes, she would risk her life also, if need be.

The wind howled, the snow still drifted, but on she went till she reached the sea shore. Already a number of half-frozen women and children had been brought ashore, and taken to the nearest houses.

As the night wore on the storm increased in violence, the sea was mountains high, and broke over the skiffs as they tried to reach the sinking ship, drenching the occupants to the skin. The snow drift was so thick that they could scarcely see a yard ahead. It was a long, weary row from the harbor to the scene of the wreck, and, at last, the men were beaten out, and as the last skiff touched land bearing their burden of human misery, they threw themselves on the beach exhausted, declaring they could do no more.

"Where is Tom Blake," asked Mollie, who had been all this time helping the women and children in every way she could.

"He is in the doomed ship, Miss Maxwell," answered one of the men. "He and the Captain are all that are left. They refused to come with us, as the boat was already overcrowded and they could not run the risk of losing all. May God help them both, for we cannot."

Mollie clasped her hands in despair. "Oh," she cried, must I bring to my sister the tidings that her children are fatherless? Oh! cannot something be done?"

"There is no boat could reach that ship again to-night, Miss Maxwell, nothing more can be done till daylight. If she is in sight, then we will go to her. If she is not, well—God have mercy on them."

Mollie sprang forward, jumped into one of the skiffs, and her voice rang out brave and clear:

"Are there four men who are willing to come? Give me only four. I will steer. Quick, we have no time to lose. I know it is a hard thing to ask, for you must be exhausted. I

know it is risking your lives, but it is in a good cause. We all have to die and could we die in a nobler way?"

The men stared at her aghast. "You Miss Maxwell," they asked.

"And why not I?" she answered, I am strong and willing, and I think my eyes can penetrate this gloom as good as any of yours."

Four men rose to their feet, and went towards her. Her courage, and bravery roused their failing energies and gave them a new strength.

"We would not think of allowing you to do it Miss Maxwell, it would be a disgrace to our manhood. You've done too much already. You should be in your home now instead of here. Get out and I'm sure as we've got the four men we will find a fifth."

"Oh, no, no, she cried, eagerly, "cannot you let me go I am not one bit tired, and I'm not afraid."

Another man came forward then, "Here is the fifth," he said, "and you can go home and pray for us, Miss Maxwell, that is women's work, leave us ours."

"Why can I not do something as well as you?" she cried.

"You have done something, Miss Maxwell; if Tom Blake, and the Captain are saved to-night, they must owe their lives to you, for you roused up our courage." The man took her hand, and she was forced to get out "Be kind to my wife, and little ones if I never return," he said. "Oh, you will, you will come back," she cried. "God will not let you perish like this. He will protect you."

They were off; the blinding drift in a few moments hid them from view, and the splash of the oars was lost in the deafening roar of the sea. Down upon her knees in the cold snow sank Mollie.

"Shall they ever return," she moaned, "or shall I have sent five more men to their death to-night? Oh! God of Heaven, if the offering of my life would avail to save theirs,, take it and save them."

It seemed hours to the watchers on shore, when, to their anxious gaze, a dark object loomed from out the shrouding snow drift, and a faint sound of the oars fell, like sweetest music on their straining ears.

"All safe?" shouted a voice from the shore.

"All safe, thank God," was answered back.

Out as far as they dared, into the water rushed the men, and, amid cries of joy and thanksgiving, dragged the skiff up on the beach. Just as they landed, Mollie—now that the reaction had come—staggered and would have fallen had not the Captain caught her in his arms.

"Mollie," he cried, "Mollie, do you not know me. Look at me?" She started, raised her head and looked closely into his. "Jack, oh Jack," she cried, and then fainted away.

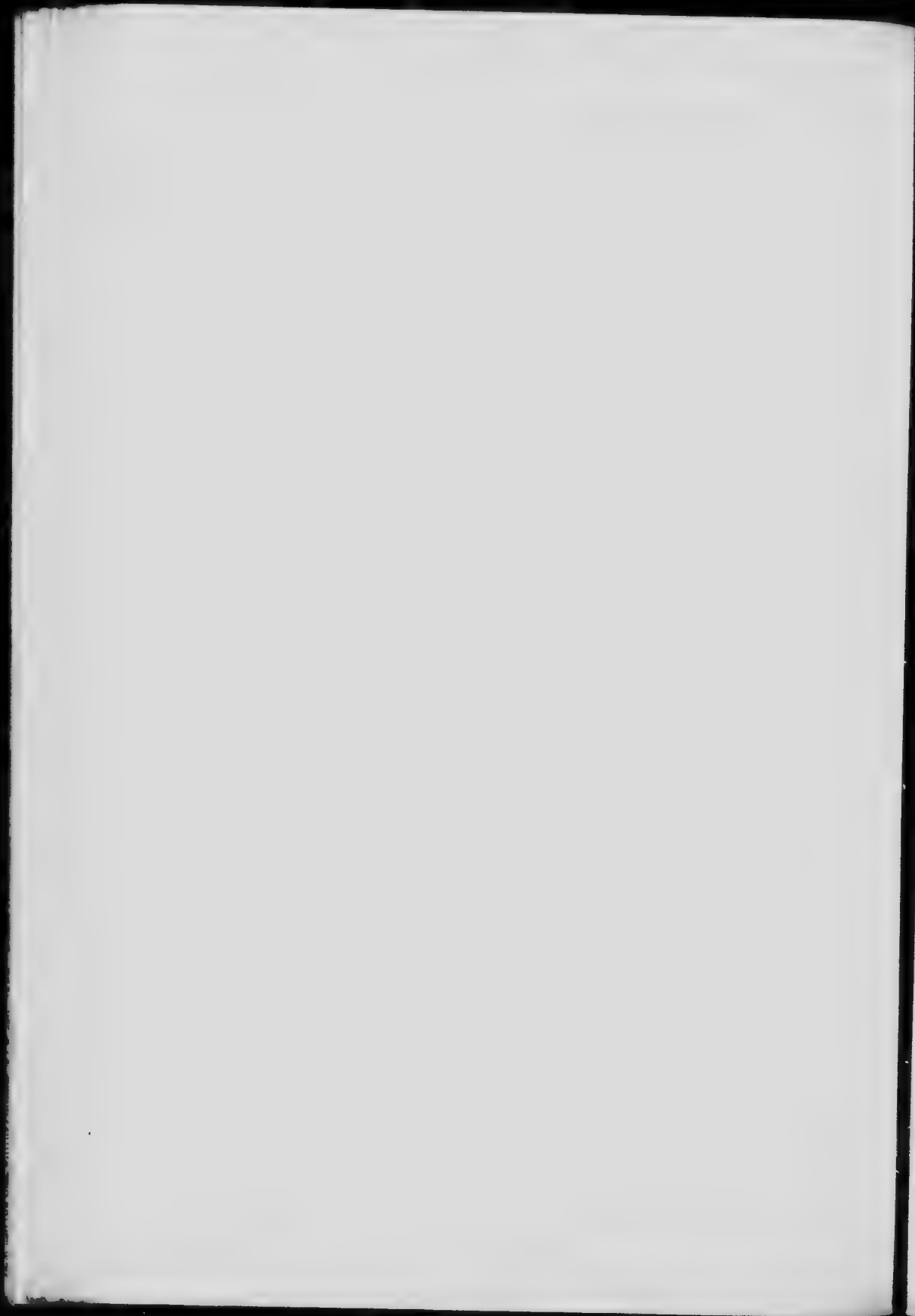
With the dawn of Christmas Day the storm abated, and not a vestige of the wrecked ship was to be seen. It had sunk to the bottom, but not one soul had perished with it. To this day that terrible shipwreck, and Mollie's heroism are spoken of in the village.

As soon as she revived, Tom Blake said to Mollie, "It was when we were alone together, and eternity stared us in the face, that Jack and I recognized each other, and then I told him how I had wronged him, and asked his forgiveness. It was freely granted. We then expected death every moment. I told him of your life, of devotion to his memory, of your discovery to-night, and what you threatened to do. He has been faithful to your memory all these years, though he thought you had forgotten him as you did not answer his letters. I explained why. When we heard the boat coming we knew we were saved. The men told us how your example had given them strength to risk their lives again and that you were waiting on the beach, the only woman there. Jack has promised, never to let my wife know of my crime. We have a plan of clearing him, without implicating my guilty self. Will you too keep my secret, Mollie?"

"With my life, Tom," she answered.

Later that day, Jack said to her, "Though for twenty years we have been kept apart, Mollie, happiness will yet be ours, and perhaps the autumn of our lives, which we shall spend together, may be all the sweeter, for having missed the spring time."

THE END.



Snowed in at Tickle Harbor ;

OR,

Granny Hunt's Prediction.

CHAPTER I.

HE had been waiting till past the appointed hour by the side of the pretty rippling stream, where, since their short acquaintance, one week, they had met each evening.

Short as the time seemed, it was long enough for them to learn that they could not live apart. How many have learned it in a much shorter period; how many, in spite of all, have had to live apart, with broken hearts and shattered hopes, and only the memory of bygone happy days to cheer their lonely hours.

Phil Bryne, seemed doomed to be one of the latter; his heart was full of tender thoughts, and a smile of happiness played round his handsome mouth, as, in imagination, he found himself listening to the answer which, he felt sure, must come to the momentous question he had put to her on the previous evening.

But why, he wondered, did she delay in coming; she had always been punctual hitherto? Presently, he heard a light footstep tripping along the soft grass, and a pretty dark-haired girl of eighteen, stands before him.

She would not have felt flattered, if the deepening twilight had not prevented her noticing the look of disappointment which overspread his face. She, for whom he waited, was

taller and slimmer, with golden hair and blue eyes. Tho' half sisters they were not at all alike.

"You are expecting my sister," began Jane Thorne, smiling and blushing, and trying to look as charming as possible.

"Yes," he answered. "I am expecting Emily. Has anything detained her?"

"No; but she asked me to come here and tell you that it cannot be."

"What cannot be?" asked Phil Bryne, growing white at the bare possibility of a refusal.

"Oh, I don't know," answered the little lady, with an innocent face, "whatever you wanted, I suppose. She said that answer would settle all; that it cannot be."

"Where is your sister? I will go to her," and he was about hastening away.

"It's no use," Jane answered quickly. "She is not home now."

"Then tell me where she has gone, and I will follow her."

"I cannot say exactly where. She went walking with Mr Raymond."

"With Mr Raymond?" repeated the young man, in pained astonishment. "Why I thought she disliked him?"

"Not at all," the girl replied, shaking her head. "I'm almost sure Emily is to marry Mr Raymond."

"And this then, is the end of it. She was merely having a week's amusement at my expense, and then sends a child like you to me with such an answer."

"Please do not call me a child, Mr Bryne," said Jane, with an injured air. "I am eighteen."

The young man scarcely heard her: he looked about him in a bewildered manner, and Jane could get no opening to attempt to win his confidence, so the words of condolence and prettily arranged speeches were left unspoken.

"She asked me to tell you something else, too," she went on.

What is it?" he demanded.

"That you will not try to see her again for some time, as it would only make it unpleasant for her."

"I'll not trouble her," he answered bitterly, and, without another word, he turned and left the wood.

CHAPTER II.

About five years later, Mrs Thorne, early one morning, entered her daughter's room, a troubled expression on her face. To Jane's look of enquiry, she said: "I've been trying since last evening to get a word with you in private. We are undone, Jane. I met Mrs Bryne, yesterday, and she told me that Phil is coming home for Christmas. Of course, he and Emily will meet, and I expect, everything will come out. I am sorry, my dear, you had anything to do between them."

"Why do you not say we, mother. I would not have done anything if you had not helped and advised me."

"I think you ought not to be so ungrateful as to reproach me for what I did in trying to secure for you a brilliant future. You know that first, before he and Emily met. Phil Bryne paid you marked attention. So I thought that if he could be made to believe there was no chance of her, he would turn again to you, and a husband as wealthy as Phil Bryne, is not to be had every day."

"Yes," Jane replied, "and he rewarded me for my pains by first calling me a child, and then going off like an ignoramus, leaving me to go home alone, and left the country next day, however, perhaps I may have a chance yet."

"Well, you are just as pretty, if not prettier than Emily," answered Mrs Thorne.

"Well, I should think so," Jane replied; "but she must be got away somewhere. How are we going to do it?"

"I don't know, I'm sure; one thing is certain, they must not meet". Suddenly Mrs Thorne sprang to her feet. "I have it," she cried. "I've thought of something; just leave it to me."

One day, some weeks later, the loud, imperative postman's knock resounded through the house of Mrs Thorne, who, with her daughter and stepdaughter, were seated at work near the window, trying to catch the last glimmer of the fast departing December twilight. With a bound Jane was at the door, and soon returned with a letter, which she handed to Emily. As

the girl read it her face fell, and a knowing look passed between mother and daughter, who were watching her intently. She raised her bright, pretty face full of dismay to her step-mother, saying: "Aunt Katherine has asked me to spend Christmas with her, mother, and says she will feel awfully disappointed if I refuse. What am I to say to her?"

"Why, that you will go, of course," answered Mrs Thorne. "How could you refuse your mother's only sister such a simple request."

"Why, certainly go," assented Jane. "I think it would be most unkind not to gratify her."

O'er Emily's fair face stole a look of pained disappointment. "I have never spent Christmas away from home," she said, "and I thought that, poor papa being so shortly dead, you would both feel a little lonely without me," and she tried hard to keep back the tears,

Oh! as for that, Jane and I would sacrifice ourselves, I'm sure, for your pleasure."

"And," continued Jane, "you will have all the advantages. We can have nothing here in the way of amusement being in mourning. I daresay it will be quite jolly at your aunt's; they always do have a merry Christmas in small villages."

"Oh! Jane," replied her sister reproachfully, "as if I could think of amusement just now."

"Oh, well we cannot live by the dead," Jane retorted, as she left the room.

"I think you had better go, Emily," said Mrs Thorne. "It will please your aunt, and you've a cousin there, too, have you not?"

"Yes, mother, Aunt Katherine has a daughter, and as you do not seem to miss my society very much, I will go to Tickle Harbor, and spend Christmas with my aunt and cousin."

CHAPTER III.

"Oh! you superstitious little girl," she said laughing. Emily Thorne's cousin, shut the door with a bang, and bounded across the kitchen floor towards the large wood stove, where she threw herself at her cousin's feet. "How good it was of you to come and spend Christmas with us, Emily. Such old-fashioned fogies as ourselves, living, you might say, out of the world."

"I can assure you, Rose dear. I have not for a moment regretted coming, for the pleasure is all mine. Why, you seem to do nothing else but wait on me all the time. I fear I shall be quite spoiled by the time I get back to St. John's."

"Indeed I wish we could keep you altogether. I was always wishing to see you. I often asked mother to invite you, but she used to say: 'My dear child, what would Emily Thorne do with herself here; she would die of loneliness; and only that your stepmother wrote and said you wished to come:—oh, there,' exclaimed Rose, breaking short, 'I've let the cat out of the bag. Mrs Thorne said we were not to tell you she wrote.'"

Emily was dumbfounded. So this was the meaning of her aunt's invitation. What object could her stepmother have in sending her from her old home at Christmas time? but she said nothing of it to her cousin.

"I'm afraid," rattled on Rose, "that we shall be cheated out of our fun to-night, if it's too stormy for Granny Hunt to come over. You have not seen her yet, Emily. She is about eighty, I think, and has grandchildren by the dozen, and great-grand children by the score. She tells our fortunes and they all come true. Oh! a fact," as she saw Emily smile incredulously.

"Oh! you superstitious little girl," she said laughing.

"She told me mine last year," went on Emily, "and it all came true. You must let her tell yours, if she comes to-night. She has spent every Christmas Eve with us for the past, I don't know how many years, and we have a dance and supper, and lots of fun; the boys and girls will soon be here now."

Shortly they began to troop in, merry boys and girls, with healthy ruddy faces. One, a boy of about twelve, carried a parcel under his arm which, when taken from its case, proved to be an accordeon. All lamented the absence of Granny Hunt; only for a short time, however for soon the approach of a sled, drawn by two dogs, proclaimed her arrival, and a general chorus of "Granny Hunt, Granny's Hunt's come," resounded through the house, and an old woman, who seemed to be a bundle of wraps and shawls, covered with snow, was led into a large, warm, spacious kitchen. Supper was then partaken of, served in good style by Emily's Aunt Katherine, and then the cups were passed for Granny Hunt to toss, and read each one's destiny. They hung upon her words open-mouthed, and wonder eyed, for Granny had long ago gained notoriety as a fortune-teller. Perhaps as she unfolded their future in oracle-like accents, Granny was laughing in her sleeve at them, or it may be that she almost began to have faith in her own powers of prophecy; but Granny was shrewd, and always took care to become acquainted with some fact connected with the life of her subjects before she ventured on arranging their destiny in a decided manner. She was very keen, too, and often made a good guess by studying their faces, whether one had a bright or unhappy past; and so when it came to Emily's turn to pass her cup she looked very sharply at her and thought, "she is well into the twenties, must be her own fault that she is single, looks sad at times, an unhappy love affair certainly." Then after studying the cup intently for some time, she began: "Ah, my dear, you've been crossed in love long ago. A handsome young man wooed you, but it seems that someone made trouble between you; there are many at present, who have the heartache over your coldness to them; but wait now let me see, Yes you will meet your old lover again, and everything will come right." Then a sudden idea struck Granny, and her old eyes brightened. "There are two roads, my dear," she continued, "either of which you are at liberty to take, by the one, you will meet your old lover, and if you follow the other it will lead you to a different and perhaps as happy a fate, in the shape of a tall handsome stranger: it will be soon too, even this very night, maybe."

"Ah, go on, Granny," said a red-faced youth of twenty, who had not been able to take his eyes from Emily's face since he entered the house. "What stuff are you giving us; sure there

is no one here as would suit the young lady. What tall, handsome stranger is to be found in Tickle Harbor?"

"Perhaps a good many for all you know, you young upstart," said Granny, "and perhaps I can tell you all a bit of news, old as I am. As you all know, there have been piles upon piles of snow for the past week, more than we have had for years so early in the season, and the track is blocked up so that the train cannot get on to St. John's to-night, and as there is now every sign of the night getting fine, we shall have the passengers going about the village, and how many tall, handsome strangers might there not be among them? Now, you young gaffer, put that in your pipe and smoke it."

There was a general laugh and a chorus of "Well done, Granny; you got one on Sam that time, well done."

"Why, then, I'll get ahead of you Granny, for I'll go and fetch some of the tall, handsome strangers up here to our dance," and Sam jumped up from the table, and made for his coat and hat.

"Well done, Sam boy, you're a brick after all," roared a stalwart son of Tickle Harbor, whilst all the girls clapped their hands with delight, and each one, in imagination, felt herself whirled round to the strair the accordeon in the arms of a tall, handsome stranger.

Then there was a general clear away, tables and chairs were pushed into corners, mats were taken from the floor, squares were formed, the music struck up, and the dancing commenced. Emily refused to join in the dance on account of her recent bereavement. Set after set of quadrilles were danced, it was drawing near midnight, and as yet, Sam had not arrived with any tall, handsome strangers, and some of the damsels, whose eyes had been glued to the door all night, began to grow disheartened.

There was a general cry now for "Sir Roger de Coverly." It was quickly formed, and the first part gone through, when the door burst open, and Sam entered with two tall, handsome strangers.

"Here," said Sam, "are two gentlemen as wants a cup of tea, and a night's lodging, as it is so cold and uncomfortable in the cars, so, I told them that they could not come to a better place than here, and I brought them along."

The dancing ceased immediately. Emily was standing alone in a quiet corner, her pretty face flushed with excitement

from watching the dancers. As she glanced towards the door, her eyes met those of the tallest, and handsomest of the strangers. She uttered a low cry, and fell back in a chair.

The gentleman started, turned very white, and then advanced towards her. Both gained their self-possession in a short time.

"This lady," he explained, "is an old friend of mine, a pleasure of which I did not dream was in store for me."

"Emily," he murmured, in a low voice, when he got an opportunity, "who would ever dream of our meeting here, in this out of the way place, or, pardon me, I should say Miss Thorne, though I may not be right even yet, for I suppose you are married."

"I am still Miss Thorne," she answered. "Are you surprised at it, Mr Bryne?"

"I am," he replied. "I thought, you would have been Mrs Raymond by this time."

"And why Mrs Raymond?"

"Taking into consideration, that you were walking with him, on the evening five years ago, when you broke your appointment with me, and nearly broke my heart, too, and destroyed my faith in all women, and, besides, your sister told me you were to marry him."

"My sister told you, I was to marry Mr Raymond; she made a great mistake. I cannot think what made her say such a thing. Anyway, that is neither here nor there now, but I should like you to explain, how I broke my appointment with you on that evening, when it was yourself who did the breaking?"

"In what way may I ask?"

"Did you not meet my sister, and ask her to tell me that you could not be at the appointed place till half-past eight instead of half-past seven? I went at half-past eight, and you were not there; neither did I see you again, nor has there ever been any explanation offered to me of your conduct."

Phil Bryne, looked the astonishment he felt.

"Emily," he said, "there has been some foul play. I never sent a message to you; never saw your sister that day, until she came to me in the wood, and told me she was sent by you to say that the answer to my proposal, was, 'that it could not be.' I would not abide by it, and was about going to the house, determined on seeing you, when she told me you were not at

home, that you had gone out walking with Mr Raymond. I remarked that it was strange, that I always thought you disliked him. She said, "No, that it was likely you would marry him."

"And I had, only the day before, confided everything to her," said Emily.

Their eyes met, and in that moment, each read the other's soul, each knew, they had been the victim of a conspiracy, each knew, that both had been faithful, each felt, by their own experience, what the other must have suffered during the long years of pain and loneliness.

"We have both suffered, Emily, dearest," said Phil, "but now the lonely hours are o'er."

"Oh, Phil," murmured Emily, "it makes my heart sick unto death, when I think of what I suffered at that time."

"Did you leave St. John's purposely to avoid me?" he asked.

"No," she answered, "I did not know you were expected."

"Mrs Thorne knew it," he replied. "for my mother told me in my last letter, that she was speaking to your stepmother, and told her of my intended visit."

And now Emily's eyes were opened, as to their object in getting her out of St. John's during Phil Bryne's stay there; but they were daughters of one father, and so she kept this second vile secret of theirs, locked in her own heart.

A week later, Mrs Bryne received a letter from her son, a portion of which she read to Mrs Thorne and Jane. It was this: "We were snowed in at Tickle Harbor, on Christmas Eve. Whilst rebelled at the unkindness of fate, I did not know what happiness was in store for me, for here I have met Emily Thorne. All is explained between us, and we are to be married here. Then we will go and spend a few weeks with you before we depart for our future home in New York."

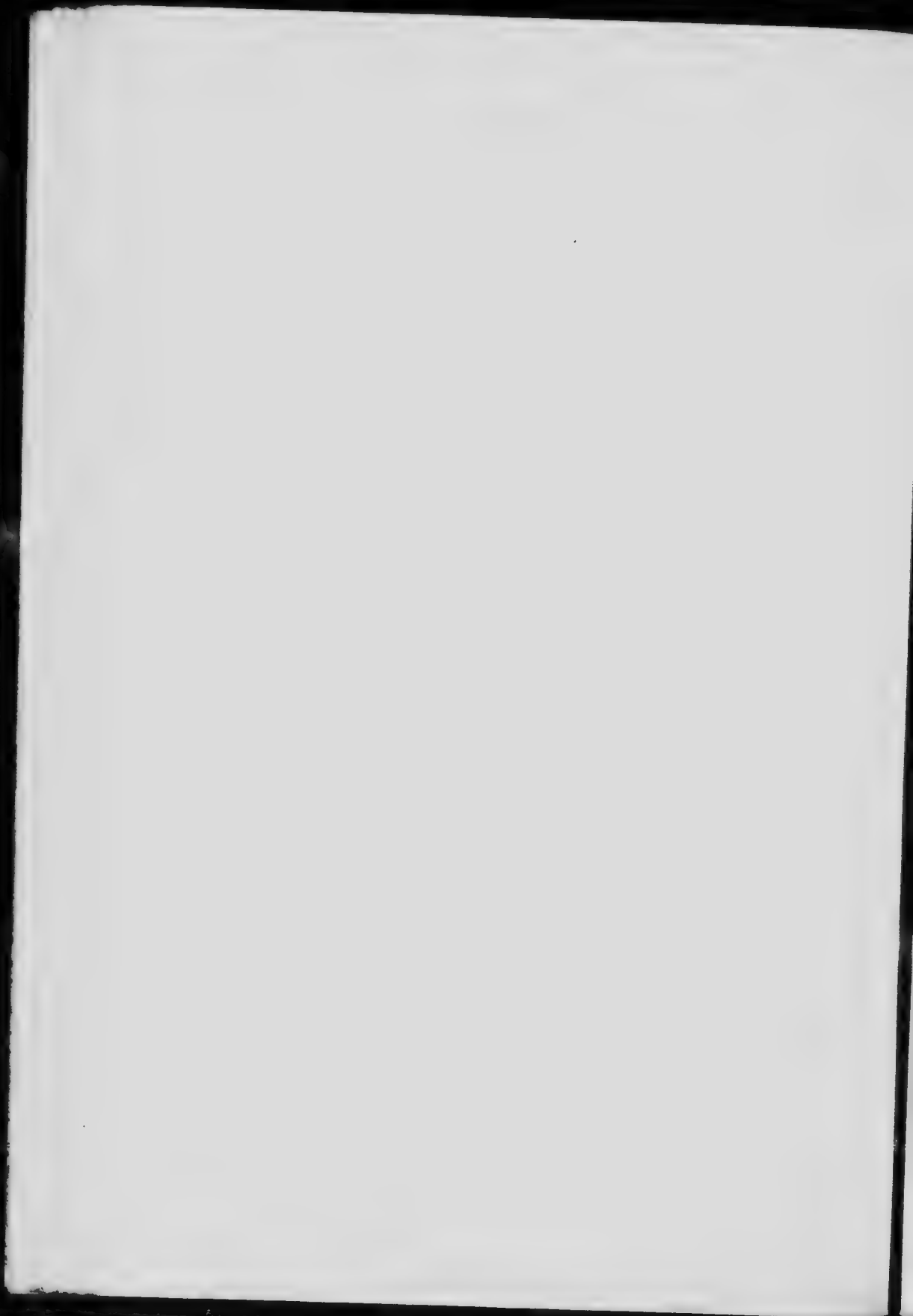
When granny Hunt, was about retiring for the night, Emily sought her and, taking her old, wrinkled hands, into her soft, white ones said: "You have earned a reputation for yourself to-night Griny. The two roads you told me of, have met and merged into one, for in the tall, handsome stranger you predicted for me, I have found my old lover, and no words can tell how happy I am."

At midnight, Phil led Emily to the door. There were a few snowflakes still falling. "Oh, beautiful snow," he said, "how

kind you have been to me. I bless the storm a thousand times, and I bless poor old Granny Hunt for causing Sam to bring us here."

As he clasped her in his arms, he said: "I shall always think of the night we were snowed in at Tickle Harbor, as the happiest of my life."

THE END.



Looking for Santa Claus.

CHAPTER I.

IT is Christmas Eve; what memories the night recalls, joyful ones for some, sad, regretful ones for others. To the little ones, whose tender feet have yet to tread life's thorny path, it brings but the memory of Santa Claus' last year's presents; to the youth and maiden, perhaps, nothing more sublime than the memory of a Christmas box from some particular loved one, with a secret wonder as to what it shall be this year; to the old it brings many memories, and as they look far back into the faded past, perhaps, the faces of some loved departed ones, who oft times helped to make their Christmas happy, will gleam, clear and bright, from out the shadowy mist of years, and their voices seem to mingle with the peal of the midnight bells.

But, alas, it is to the lesser portion of mankind that Christmas brings the sweet, hopeful, and sublime memories, that should accompany this Holy season,—the Season of peace and good will to all men.

How few, compared with the many millions who inhabit this globe,—whose thoughts will go back nearly two thousand years, when the wise men from the East followed the star to Bethlehem, and Christ, in the form of a helpless babe, came down from Heaven, to dwell among us.

Perhaps, some such thoughts as these, fill the mind of the sad-eyed woman who stands at her window, watching eagerly for some one who does not come.

It is eight o'clock, and she has just put the little ones to bed with the assurance that Santa Claus will bring to each the

exact present desired, at the same time puzzling her brain to know where they are to come from, for it goes to her heart to think of their disappointment on the morrow, and of their simple, childish faith in Santa Claus being destroyed by the non-appearance of the usual Christmas toys.

Alas! it is the old story. Some twelve years ago her husband had taken her from a home of happiness, and luxury. For a few short years, their home was filled with love, and contentment, but soon the demon of drink, and the allurements of the bar room, weaned him from the love of his wife and children. For a time, the hapless young wife and mother, strove hard to win him back to his home and duty, but of late she had given up all hope. The love and care of the little ones, helped to cheer and comfort her somewhat. It was now long past eight o'clock, and she grew heartsick and hopeless, for well she knew what the delay meant. Years of experience had taught her, that he would likely get home some time next morning with perhaps every cent gone. She remained standing at the window, her tears falling fast.

Meanwhile, the little ones were fast asleep, dreaming of old Santa's presents, and sweet cake on the morrow, all, except the eldest girl, Mollie, who, being eleven years old, and a very thoughtful child, had of course, reached the stage, when children no longer believe in the existence of Santa Claus. She remained at the bedside till the little ones had gone to sleep, and her mind was now busily employed in thinking what she should do to help her mother, for she well knew the cause of her grief.

"Now," she thought, "Charlie wants a sled, and Kitty a doll, what can I do to get them? Oh, I wish there was a real Santa Claus, and I would go to him, and tell him what we all want."

Then she thought of the stories their mother had often told them of the Baby God in Bethlehem, and how He would refuse no request—especially that of a little child—which was asked of him on Christmas Eve. So throwing herself on her knees, she prayed Him to direct her to some one who would, in reality, be a Santa Claus to them that night.

"Now," she thought, as she arose from her knees, "I will go out without letting Mamma know, and I will have a delightful surprise for her when I return." She put on her little cloak, and in taking her hat from the trunk near the bed, the cover

slipped from her hand, and came down with such a bang, that Charlie started up.

Seeing his sister dressed for the street, he lisped, "Mollie, where's ou goin' in the dark night?"

"Hush, dear," she replied, placing her hand over his mouth, "don't waken Kitty, and don't tell Mamma. I'm going to look for Santa Claus."

"Why, won't he tum to us, unless you doe for him?"

"Oh, yes, but we've moved since last year, and he may not konw where to find us now."

The little fellow seemed quite satisfied at this explanation, and lying down again, was soon fast asleep, whilst poor little Mollie went forth into the frosty night, to find, as she firmly believed, a Sants Claus.

She had formed no definite plan, as to what she would do or where she would go. A lot of ideas went running through her mind. She thought that, perhaps, she might find her father and he would give her some money to get the toys, or, she might meet some very kind gentleman, or lady, to whom she could tell her story, and they could help her. Poor child, she had yet to learn how hard the world was!

She soon reached Water Street. It was ablaze with light, and thronged with people. On and on she went, till she got a good distance up town, and as yet, she had not met her Santa Claus. She was beginning to get disheartened. She had not yet seen the lady or gentleman, to whom she could tell her story, for she intended to judge by the face, the one who could help her, and those she had met so far seemed hard and cold. Once, she tried to speak to a lady, who, she thought seemed kinder than the rest, but she only threw her a few cents and passed on. She stopped now to look into the window of a toy shop, and there she saw the very sled, Charlie wanted, and dolls, one of which would just suit Kitty. Oh! how she longed to get them. A sleigh stopped in front of the shop, and a lady and gentleman got out; they stood for some time looking into the window, speaking to each other of what they wished to buy. Mollie thought she would venture to speak to them. "Perhaps," she thought, "they have little children of their own, and can understand me." Approaching the lady, she began to tell her trouble, but she either would not or could not understand her. The gentleman came nearer, and asked what it was.

"This child is wanting money to get toys, I think," explained the lady.

"Toys, indeed," echoed the gentleman. "I think now you ought very well be satisfied with something to eat, and not mind about toys, besides, its no night at all for a youngster to be out begging, so you had better go home," and they passed on into the shop.

Was this then to be the answer to her prayer? Tears came to her eyes, and in spite of all her efforts to keep them back, rolled down her cheeks. One rough fellow, said to her, "Hello, youngster, what's up? you'd bet'er go home to your ma." A policeman then came along, and asked her if she had lost her way, saying "I'll take you home if you tell me the name of your street."

"Oh, no," cried Mollie. "I know my way well enough." The thought of a policeman bringing her home, seemed to paralyze her with fright, and she turned quickly up a narrow lane, which led to the next street, to escape observation, for she could not cease crying, try as she would. She walked on till she had reached the extreme upper end of the town. Here the passers by were not so many, but they began eying her curiously, and she turned up the next street till she scarcely knew where she was, but still she went on and found herself in the suburbs of the city, and now it occurred to her that she had really lost her way, and almost wished the much-dreaded policeman was there to take her home. She thought of her mother's anxiety, for of course, she had missed her ere this, of Charlie's and Kitty's empty stockings, of no sweet cake for Christmas. She felt cold, tired, and hungry. This, then was to be the end of her search for Santa Claus, and she had come out so full of hope and courage. A few yards ahead she noticed a handsome looking house, with steps leading to a small garden in front. She walked slowly up to it and, sitting on the lower step, she leaned her tired little head against the post, and began to cry bitterly.

CHAPTER II.

We will now picture another and far different home scene. This time, it is a room brilliantly lighted, and luxuriously furnished. A cheerful fire burned in the polished grate. A Christmas tree, laden with fruit, and colored lights, stood in a corner, and sitting on a rug in front of the fire, her head resting on her hand, is a girl of twelve or thirteen. She is the only occupant of the room, but this does not trouble her much, for her Aunt and Uncle who have charge of her since the death of her parents, are not very desirable companions. They are kind to her after a fashion, but they lack the art of sympathising with a child's feelings, and Eve was of a peculiar disposition. She was thoughtful and wise beyond her years, and on this occasion was feeling anything but happy. Why, she could scarcely tell. She had, as far as her guardians could see, everything she wanted, but she often felt the absence of affection on their part, and a longing for some one to whom she could confide her girlish fancies, likes and dislikes.

Her education, hitherto had been attended to at home, hence the absence of companions of her own age, which rendered her life so lonely. It was arranged however, to send her to school at an early date, and Eve looked forward with pleasure to this change in the monotony of her life. To-night, her guardians had gone out to make a few purchases. Eva wished to go with them, but they did not ask her.

Before leaving the house, her uncle took up a small savings bank from the table. "Well, Eva," he said, "I daresay you have about ten dollars here now."

"I don't know uncle," she answered. "I suppose about that much."

"That is a nice sum for a girl to have to do what she likes with. You don't seem to value it though."

"No," she replied, "I don't care about money. I don't know what to buy with it."

"Ah, well, there are many who would be glad to have that

much for their common wants to-night, and here you have it for pocket money."

When they had gone, she began thinking of what her uncle had said. "I wish," she said to herself, "I knew of someone who wanted it to-night, and I would gladly give it to them." She arose with a sigh, and going to the piano, played the *Adeste Fideles*." She then went to the window and drawing aside the heavy crimson curtains looked out at the cold starlit night. As she did so, she noticed a small, dark figure sitting on the step, and after a moment discovered that it was a little girl.

At first, she thought she was asleep, but no, she saw her raise her head several times, and glance around, and now she heard the sound of weeping.

Raising the window very softly, she listened. Yes, she was right, the little girl was crying bitterly. This was enough for Eva, with a bound, she was downstairs and by Mollie's side, who, the reader, has no doubt guessed, it was.

"What is the matter little girl?" she asked. "Can I help you?" Mollie raised her head to look at her companion. Ah, here was surely a good kind face, but only a child like herself.

"Oh," she answered, "I have lost my way, mother will be looking for me, and I am so cold and tired, but that's not the worst."

"Not the worst," repeated Eva. "Well, we will soon find a remedy for being cold," and taking her hand, she drew her through the hall, and upstairs, and into the bright, warm room she had just left, and ringing the bell, she told the maid, who answered, to bring up some cocoa and cake, which she made Mollie take before she said another word.

When she had finished, Eva listened to her story, from where she had prayed to find a Santa Claus till she sat on the steps of Eva's own door to rest.

"Well, Mollie," said Eva, when she had done, "the Babe of Bethlehem has heard your prayer, and sent you to me."

She left the room for a short time, and returned, bringing a large basket and some clothes. She put warm gaiters on Mollie's feet, tied a woollen cloud around her, put gloves on her hands, then put on her own outdoor garments, placed a sweet loaf in the basket with some fruit from the tree, and taking the hitherto, despised little bank from the table, the key of which was in her pocket, said to Mollie, "come now, take

one end of the basket, we have no time to lose. I know the way to your street quite well," and together they went.

Oh, how light poor Mollie's heart felt, during the walk home. She and Eva became as intimate, as if they had known each other for years.

When they arrived, they found Mollie's mother in a state of anxiety over her prolonged absence. She seemed surprised when she saw a stranger in company with her little truant.

It did not take them long to explain all. "And now," said Eva, "Mollie and I, must go to Water Street to get the toys."

But the honest woman was loathe to allow the child to spend her money without the consent of her guardians, and not until Eve had explained that it was all her own, which had been given her from time to time, to do as she pleased with, did she consent to take it. She felt that she would be refusing a gift from Heaven, did she persist in not availing of the child's generosity, but she mentally resolved to return it at a future day.

When the children had gone, she went to a coal shed near by, and procured some fuel for the coming week, so when they returned in a sleigh, which they had hired from the stand, she had a bright fire burning.

Eva waited to see the stockings filled, with the sled and doll hung near them, and wishing Mollie and her mother a Merry Christmas, sprang into the sleigh, and was driven home.

"Why, where have you been?" asked her aunt

"I've been acting Santa Claus," she answered, "and found use for my money."

She then told the whole story. They scarcely knew whether to reprimand her or not. There was something in the truth and simplicity of the tale, which seemed too sacred for their worldly minds to comprehend, so they said nothing, and as the midnight bells rung in the Holy Christmas morn, and Eva and Mollie, listened to their welcome sound, which, dear reader, do you think was the happier of the two?

Shortly after midnight, Mollie's father arrived, sobered now, when he realized that every cent which they had been looking forward to, for their little wants for Christmas, had disappeared. When he was shown the full stocked cupboard, and saw the bright fire, and heard the story from his wife's lips, he remained some time in deep thought, then placing his

hand on Mollie's golden head, he said, "God bless you my child, your prayer to the Babe of Bethlehem, has done more than finding Santa Claus, it has made me from this night a better man," and he kept his word.

This was some years ago, Mollie and Eva are now young ladies, and since that memorable night have been the fondest, and truest of friends. Mollie now lives in a house, as grand as Eva's, and they often, together with Charlie, and Kitty, bless the happy Christmas Eve, that Mollie went looking for Santa Claus.

THE END.





His Lode - Star; OR, The Beacon that Guided.

CHAPTER I.

“**T**IS as bad a Christmas Eve as ever I remember,” said old Dennis Doyle to his wife as he dropped the window blind, and turned with a shiver, from the wintry scene without, to the bright blazing fire within. It was an old fashioned grate with hobs on either side, and a wide, open chimney, with benches built around. It was an old-fashioned fire too, and the blaze flew up the chimney, with a crackling, cheery, old-fashioned sound.

The tiny cottage was very old-fashioned, being but one story high, with a slanting roof, the topmost peak of the chimney being all that was now visible to the outside world, for the snow, which had fallen for days without ceasing, had buried it in a deep, white valley. It stood on the side of a lonely country road in St. John's, six miles from the city, and almost a mile from the nearest house.

Well, to make everything correspond, they were an old-fashioned couple and lived many years ago in an old-fashioned time. They were very poor, the house contained but two bedrooms, and a kitchen, which, though clean, lacked many a comfort. The wind howled and moaned outside, and the snow drift beat against the window panes.

“Jack'll not be with us to-night, Nancy,” the old man said, in a sad, disappointed tone, as he sat upon the bench in the chimney corner.

"I'm thinking the same, Denis," she answered, and the deep despair in her voice, was an echo of his. "I hoped, and hoped all day, but now, that night has settled down, and such a night too, I have given up. Oh, my boy, my boy," she murmured, "if you only know how sorely in need your old father and mother are to-night, you would keep your promise."

"Tell me again, Nancy," he said, "what were the words he wrote about coming home."

"I'll be with you, father and mother, on Christmas Eve, if I'm alive and well, and, you know, I always keep my promises. I've struck it lucky too, since I left home five years ago, and I've enough of money to keep us all comfortable and happy, for the rest of our lives, and I'll never leave you again, so cheer up, and keep a good heart, your boy will be there to make your Christmas happy, and your New Year bright. These are the words of his last letter, Denis, and 'tis Christmas Eve, and he is not here."

"The night is not gone yet, Nancy, and it is my opinion that the storm is keeping him. He could never beat a path through this deluge of snow."

"Not now, in the darkness, but where was he all day? He would be with us if he were alive and well, he said; ah! I wonder is he alive and well? My heart misgives me, for I'm sure it's no small thing, that keeps him from us to-night. What if he were on the road after sundown and lost his way. He would be smothered in the snow drift."

"Don't look at the dark side, Nancy, maybe he arrived in town late this evening and would not venture on the road, and we'll have him with us to-morrow."

"And a poor dinner is all we'll have for him, Christmas and all as it is," answered Nancy, "it's many a year since we've had so bare a yule tide, Denis."

"Well, it could be worse, Nancy."

"What could make it worse, Denis?"

"Suppose our house were to blow down or burn down, that would be worse, would it not? Let us be thankful that, at least, we have a shelter over our heads."

"Ah, well, if one of these things were to happen, everything would be over for us, and all we could do would be to lie down in its ashes and perish with it."

The old man yawned wearily, put his pipe on the mantel-piece, and stretched himself on the bench. The odor and

warmth of the wood fire made him drowsy, and soon his worries and disappointment, were forgotten in sleep. Nancy, sat rocking to and fro in an old armchair, her bitter disappointment banished sleep. She dreamt, but her dreams were all waking ones. The fire burned down, and she took no notice. It seemed hours since she sat there. The wind still blew, and the drif. still beat against the window pane. Suddenly, Denis Doyle started up, "The candle, the candle, Nancy," he cried.

"Yes, Denis," she answered, rousing herself and rising from the chair. "I'd have lighted it long ago, only I'm trying to keep it for to-morrow, as we've but one in the house."

"Light it, and put it in the window, Nancy, to show Jack the way, he is coming, I saw him in my dream as plainly as though I were wide awake."

"Why, 'tis daft you're getting, Denis, man. You could not see a candle light in the window to-night twenty yards from the house, and, surely, you're not going to begin at this hour of your life believing in dreams."

"Listen, Nancy, listen," he said, "this is no dream, or at least not like any dream I ever had before. It seemed to me that I stood midway between here and the city. I could see both places. I saw our boy in a crowded saloon, they were drinking and gambling. His face was flushed and excited, there was a heap of money beside him. Suddenly, he sprang from his chair, and began putting on his overcoat. His companions seemed to remonstrate with him, but to no avail, for he went from the place, leaving the money on the table. I then seemed to see him on a country road. It was snowing and drifting as it is now. He could scarcely keep his feet. I saw him fall several times and pick himself up again. At last, he seemed to become exhausted. He looked all around as if in search of a guide, or a light of some kind, then stretching forth his arms he cried out, "Oh, for a light, a beacon of some kind, to guide me." I tried to go to him, but could not move, then I tried to cry out, and in doing so I awoke. So, Nancy, as sure as you and I are here now, our boy is on the road to-night and wants a light to guide him. Get the candle, Nancy, get the candle, woman."

"'Twas a strange dream, sure enough, Denis," she answered, as she took from the shelf a tallow candle, which she placed

in a brass candle-stick, "and if this is any guide to him, he'll have it, poor boy." So saying, she lit the candle, placed it on the window ledge, rolling the blind to the top. She then piled more logs in the grate, and again, the odor and smoke from the freshly burning wood overcame Denis, for it was long past his accustomed hour for retiring, and sleep once more wooed him into forgetfulness. Nancy's eyelids too, began to droop. "After all," she thought, "I'm foolish to put any faith in that dream of Denis's, our candle will only go to waste, and we'll have no light for Jack to-morrow evening if he does come," and leaning back in her chair, she fell fast asleep.

She dreamt that she was out under the broiling sun of a summer's day, it scorched and burned her face. She tried to rise from her sitting position, but some unseen power held her down. At last, she made a desperate effort to get on her feet and did so, springing from her chair wide awake. And, horror! what a sight met her terrified gaze, almost the whole room was in a sheet of flame, the fierce blaze scorching her face, the smoke suffocating her. With a gasp of terror, she ran to where her husband had fallen asleep on the bench in the corner, and dragged him off.

"Denis, Denis," she cried, "for God's sake, wake up man, and let us run for our lives, the house is on fire."

Fortunately the flames had not yet reached the outer door. Choked, and blinded with smoke, scorched with the heat, bare-headed and all as they were, out they rushed, hand in hand. They had to force their way through the snow till they got a safe distance from the fire, and then they turned, and gazed, with a world of woe and misery in their eyes, upon their only shelter, which was now being destroyed by the fast devouring flames.

"Oh, Dennis, Dennis," cried the unhappy woman, "desolation has indeed come upon us now, for we have not even the shelter of a roof to cover us this bitter night, and we must perish in the snow."

"Oh, Nancy, what caused it," he moaned, "how did it happen, I wonder?"

"Ah, we are punished Denis, we are punished for our superstition in believing your dream."

And there they stood, shivering in the cold, the snow fall-

ing on their uncovered heads, their withered locks tossing about in the fierce gale.

As if in mercy for their forlorn condition, the snow, after a few minutes, ceased to fall, a lull came in the wind, a few black clouds dispersed, and the Christmas moon looked down in pity upon them.

CHAPTER II.

About dusk on that same evening, a ship dropped anchor in St. John's Harbor, and a fine looking, stalwart young man stepped ashore. He was accompanied by several others about his own age.

"A pretty stormy Christmas were having," one of them remarked.

"Yes, an immense pile of snow down, and looks as if it's going to keep on at it too," his companion replied.

"Well, I'll be wishing you good evening, and a Merry Christmas," said the first speaker, "I'm off for home."

"Oh, look here Jack," answered his friend, "you're not going to leave us like this on a Christmas Eve. Come and have a drink, and spend the night with us, lots of time to go home to-morrow, besides you say your house is a long distance from town, and this is no night to be on a country road after dark."

"I fear neither storm nor darkness," replied Jack. "I'll reach home alright; however, I don't mind having a drink with you, but I must not delay long, I'm bound by a promise to be at home to-night, and I mean to be there."

They entered a saloon, and soon whiskey and wine were partaken of, then a game of cards was proposed as an inducement, and they advanced to an inner room.

The hours passed, money changed hands; excitement ran high. Jack Doyle had won considerably.

Alas, for the aged parents, awaiting his return, needing his help. What of his promise to be with them to-night, was it forgotten? Ah, yes, for the time his whole mind was absorbed in the game, to which the brilliant lights, the clinking of the champagne glasses, the warmth and coziness of the room, lent a glamor.

What a small thing often turns the tide of events. In the next room, someone began playing on a flute, an old familiar air. It smote Jack's heart, with a keen self reproach, then one of the young men engaged in the game, who had a fairly good

voice, and a weakness for wishing to display its powers, began a verse of the song.

"I gaze on the moon as I trace the drear wild,
And feel that my mother now looks on her child,
She looks at that moon from her own cottage door,
Through woodbine whose fragrance can cheer me no more."

Jack stopped in the act of playing down a card, he put his hand to his flushed and heated brow, he drew a long, deep breath. "Mother, home," he moaned, and rising from the table threw down his cards.

"Why, what's the matter, Jack," came in a chorus?

"Nothing now," he answered, "something has been the matter for the past few hours. I have been an ungrateful wretch. I'm going where I should have been by this time, home."

"Oh, look here, Jack, that's too thin," said the one who had just been singing, "you're the winner by long chalks, and you want to get off with the spoil."

"Yes," joined in another, "you've got our money, and now you won't give us a chance to win it back."

"I've got your money, have I," said Jack, and going to the table where he had been sitting, he pushed a pile of notes and silver across to them. "Here, take every dollar back," and diving into his pockets, he produced more which he flung to them. "Here," he said, "is every cent I won to-night, divide it amongst you." The fellows who were after all, not a bad lot, felt ashamed, and one spoke up, saying:

"Oh, you need not be so touchy, Jack, it's not the money we want, we only wish you to stay."

But Jack was putting on his overcoat, and they saw that he was determined. "He got home-sick when he heard you sing that verse," said a third with a sneer.

"Yes, Jack replied, "I did get homesick, as you call it, and I am not ashamed of it. Home, that magic word has been my 'Lode Star,' and kept me in the straight path during my wanderings for the past five years. I can see now a small, humble cottage, and in it a gray-haired father and mother, poor and lonely, waiting the return of their long absent son, fully relying on his sacred promise to be with them to-night, and I'd be there now if I had not entered this enticing, unholy den; but

it's not too late yet. I've come to my senses, and heaven helping me, I'll be with them ere this night ends," and with a deep drawn breath of relief, he left the place.

When Jack Doyle found himself on the lonely country road, he realized that getting home was a harder task than he anticipated. During the hours he had spent in the saloon, the storm had increased in violence; he would not have minded this so much, but the snow which had been falling for some days before, was soft, not being frost or traffic enough to harden it, and so made the walking difficult and tiresome. In some places, the fences were covered, making it next to impossible to keep on the road, besides the champagne, of which he had freely partaken, was only now rising to his head, and the result was, that he wandered from the path, across fields and marshes for hours. Once he came to the side of a pond, and after leaving it, and travelling till he thought he should be near home, he found himself at the same spot again. He could see no landmark to guide him, nothing but a vast, white wilderness of snow all around. He now began to feel himself becoming exhausted. He looked in vain for the gleam of a lamp from some friendly window. His head had become quite clear now, and he fully realized that he was lost in the country at near midnight, that he could no longer drag his legs through the snow; that he must rest, though that rest meant death. He thought of the aged parents who were in such need of him, aye, and in what dire need he had yet to learn. Then he cried out, "Oh, for a light, for a beacon of some kind to guide me," and he threw himself down in the snow.

Does the spirit wander while the body sleeps, or had that cry power to pierce the senses of the sleeper in his dream? Who can tell?

The snow was not falling so heavily now, and Jack was so overheated from his terrible exertion, that he felt no cold. He could not tell how long he had lain there, or whether he had slept or not, when a keen blast of wind in the face aroused him. He sat up and looked about. Ah, what was that off in the distance? In an almost opposite direction to the one he had been taking, was a light of some kind. It seemed to illuminate the sky, and cast a lurid glare over the white snow. That sight gave Jack fresh energy, imbued him with fresh strength, roused his numbed faculties. He started up, making straight for that friendly beacon. He had not gone half a mile, when he

felt sure that it was a burning house, for, the flames seemed to rise to the sky. He hurried on as fast as his tired limbs and the deep snow would allow him, and not till he came upon a clump of trees which were old landmarks, and too tall for the snow to submerge, did he realize that it was his own home which was being fast reduced to ashes.

Then a terrible fear came to him. Where were the parents, old and feeble? Were they inside that burning house? The thought lent wings to his feet, and in a short time he came within full view. His heart gave a great throb of thankfulness to heaven, as he caught sight of them, their sad, pale faces illuminated by the red glare of the fire. Clinging to each other, in their helpless misery, they gazed in speechless agony upon what was once their home.

"Father, mother," he cried, running towards them. With a cry of joy they turned, and threw themselves in his outstretched arms.

"Oh, Jack, my boy," cried the old man, "you're none too soon to save our lives, we were unable, without help, to reach our neighbours house."

"My boy, my boy," murmured poor Nancy, the tears running down her pale cheeks. "What a terrible calamity; we both fell asleep, and when we awoke the room was in flames. We barely escaped with our lives."

"Nay, mother, father, do not call it a calamity, for this burning house has been the beacon that guided your son to his home and saved his life."

He snatched from his head his warm fur cap, and placed it upon his father's, then, taking off his long, comfortable overcoat, he wrapped it about his aged mother. "Come, now," he said, "together we will reach the next house." He then produced a flask from his pocket, and made them swallow a little brandy.

He broke from one of the tall trees a large strong branch, and keeping as much as he could, in front of them, used it to beat a path. It was a difficult journey. Many times the old couple stumbled and fell, but Jack's strong arm helped them up and they reached the house in safety, though very much exhausted. It did not take long to arouse their kindhearted neighbours, who were sound asleep, and knew nothing of the accident. A fire was quickly lighted, and, when they were warmed and fed, Denis Doyle told his dream, and all agreed

that it was a heaven sent one. The only way they could account for the fire taking place, was, that the blind must have fallen on the lighted candle and caught fire.

"Oh, happy accident," exclaimed Nancy Doyle, "since it saved your life, Jack."

"And," said Denis, "what we thought was a chastisement from heaven for our superstition, turned out to be a blessing in disguise."

"And I," said Jack, "have been taught a lesson, for if I had gone straight home when I landed, the destruction of our house would not have been necessary, but as soon as possible, father, we'll put a nice new home on the same spot where the old one stood, and where the remainder of our lives shall be spent in peace and comfort, and I will never leave you again."

"Well, as it is now long past midnight," said their kind, hospitable hostess, "and I'm sure you all need rest, come along, I have found beds for all."

"And," said Jack, "I'll redeem my promise to father and mother, by wishing them a happy Christmas, and a bright New Year."

"God bless you, lad," they murmured, and the joy they could not speak, beamed from their aged eyes, as they placed a hand each, in solemn benediction, upon his bowed head.

THE END.



Wrecked on Ambition's Tide.

CHAPTER I.

BEAUTIFUL, feathery snow, floating so gracefully down upon the frozen earth, clinging to the bare branches of the trees, nestling amongst the withered grasses, where a few tiny flakes, which had caught the parting rays of the setting sun, were gleaming like jewels.

Through a narrow wood path, which led to a small cottage, went a maid in her teens, her step buoyant, her heart light and free from care; a gay song on her lips, which were red as the holly. The snow was clinging to the crimson, woollen hood, from which the dark curls were peeping forth; the light of joy and merriment, gleamed in her dark, brown eyes, for was it not a joyful, merry season, a holy, happy, peaceful season, the Eve of Christmas.

As she came within sight of the house, she got the scent of a cigar, and a moment later, saw a tall, masculine figure approaching her.

"A simple maiden in her charms
Were worth a hundred coats of arms,"

quoted Stanley Howard, as he stood, hat in hand before her. "I wish you a Merry Christmas, Polly."

"The same to you, Mr Howard," she answered, her manner assuming a touch of coquettishness, mingled with a sweet shyness, but I daresay you won't find much merriment in this out of the way place. I am sure you must feel quite annoyed at being forced to remain."

"On the contrary, Miss Polly, I feel rejoiced at the circumstance, which has detained me. Ah! it is here you really enjoy Christmas. In St. John's, it is all business, rush, a chase after money, and when you have time to think, the Season is past."

"Still, I should like to spend a Christmas there."

"You may spend the remainder of your life there," was on his lips, but he checked himself and said, "would you rather live in the city than here?"

"I cannot tell that," she answered, naively. "I've never been there you know," and she looked up at him, her rosy cheeks dimpling in saucy smiles, which completely captivated him.

Throwing prudence to the winds, he said to himself, 'by Jove, I'll do it, come weal, come woe, I can resist her no longer,' and, taking her hands in his, he whispered:

"Polly, come with me, let me teach you to be happy there, be my own little wife, I can give you every luxury. You will have grand dresses, and jewels to enhance your beauty, and will lead a lady's life."

The girl drew back, startled for the moment, but her self-possession, of which she had a good share, soon came back to her; her cheeks flushed, and her heart beat, as she pictured herself clad in rich robes and sparkling jewels. She did not ask herself whether she loved the city aristocrat, who was far above her in the social scale, or not; her ambition was fired, and she allowed it to lead her on.

"Do you care for me enough to marry me?" she asked.

"Do I care enough for you?" he repeated. "Why, Polly, I love you, that should explain all. I love you."

"Why do you love me?" she asked. "I do not belong to your class," and she grew very serious.

"I love you for your pretty face," he answered. "Perhaps you do not know that you are possessed of rare beauty, and that would make up for other drawbacks."

"Oh, yes," she answered, with charming candor, "I am fully aware that I am rather good looking."

"Of course," he replied. "No doubt, you've been often informed of the fact before now."

Well, no, I haven't any recollection of being told so in such plain language before, but, I have a weakness for looking in

the glass occasionally, and my sight is not the least bit in fault."

Her naive remarks, and her original manner of expressing herself, only served to complete his fascination.

"Now, I call that straightforward and honest. Some of our city young ladies, would pretend that they never looked in the glass, and had not the least idea that they were pretty, that's where you country lassies come out ahead."

"Yes, that's why they say we're green, isn't it?"

"They may call it what they like, Polly, but it really is that you have not learned the hateful art of dissembling, and that is where your greatest charm lies, and you will be my wife in a few weeks won't you?"

"Your wife in a few weeks?" repeated Polly, her breath almost taken away. "I wonder if I should repent it by and by," she muttered, half to herself. "You say you love me for my beauty, Mr Howard. You think that would make up for lack of accomplishments, and a great many other things. What if I should lose that beauty? It often happens that people meet with accidents, or disease which might deprive them of it. How should I hold your love then?"

He knew that it was her beauty and originality, which alone held his fancy, and, for a moment, he was at a loss what to reply, then he said: Young people do not think of such unpleasant possibilities as these, Polly. What do you love me for?"

"I have not said that I loved you for anything," she answered smilingly. "If I promise to be your wife, it is only because you can, as you have expressed it, make a lady of me. I have always loved to wear beautiful dresses and jewelry, to live in an elegant home, such as I have read of. You see I am honest, but I do not dislike you, and, if you really love me very much, you might win my love in time. However, if it's only my pretty face which attracts you, I think it's rather a risky thing to stake my future happiness on."

He looked in surprise at her as she spoke, and the truth and wisdom of her words struck home to his heart, and for a moment he almost resolved to leave this simple country lassie, to the life for which she was fitted. He felt he was guilty of a cowardly action by trading on her weakness to induce her to yield to his wishes and enter upon a life which certainly would bring more pain than pleasure, for deep down in his heart he

knew he would weary of her when the first novelty of possession had passed away.

He looked away beyond her, whilst these thoughts passed through his mind, and there standing in the winter gloaming, he saw a young man watching them with a jealous, angry expression. He was clad in the garb of the village folk, his face, though not handsome, was good and pleasant to look at, for, truth, honesty, and manliness were visible there. Stanley Howard, knew him for an admirer of Polly's. During his short stay there, they had crossed each other's path a few times, and a kind of friction, an instinctive dislike had sprung up between them.

Now, when Stanley Howard saw him, the good resolve, which had only been half formed, passed away, and he determined to deprive this "village chap," as he termed him, of the girl he loved. He used all the eloquence, of which he was the master, pleaded so humbly, and painted in such glowing colors what her life with him would be, that at length she yielded to his entreaties so much, as to say that she would consider his offer, and give him his answer on the morrow.

There was another watcher, unseen by either. From the window of the cottage which was Polly's home, an old man looked, and his aged eyes gleamed with anger, for he made a shrewd guess as to the nature of their conversation.

"The same thing, the same thing," he murmured. "History repeating itself, but it won't have the same ending, while Uncle Jacob is here to prevent it."

An hour afterwards, as Uncle Jacob Neyle was leaving the cottage to visit his nearest neighbour, he met the jealous watcher of the scene in the wood path, at the door.

"A happy Christmas to you, Jack, my boy," he said, shaking hands with him.

"Same to you Sir," answered Jack Simmonds, "and many more of them too."

Ah, my boy, I can't expect to see many more. When a man is well into the eighties, he feels that he is long overdue in the world above, and every day he expects to hear the mystic summons. Are you going into the house?"

"Yes, Sir," and, after a slight pause, "is Polly in?"

"Yes, Jack, do you want her particularly?"

"I do, Uncle Jacob," the young man answered promptly.

"I am going to offer her my heart and hand, and a happy man I'll be if she accepts them."

"Well, I wish you God speed in your wooing my lad, Polly is a good girl, but not too good for you."

"Thank you, Sir," Jack answered, his honest face flushing with pleasure, and he passed into the house.

"That's the second heart and hand she will have offered her to-day if I'm not mistaken," muttered the old man, "and I only hope she wont pass over the gold for the dross."

As Jack Simmonds entered the cozy kitchen, Polly started up from a deep reverie.

"A Happy Christmas to you, Jack," she said extending her hand. He took it and held it fast in both his.

"It all depends on you, Polly," he replied, "whether it shall be happy or unhappy, for I am going to ask something which means a mighty lot to me, dear girl. Perhaps I cannot plead my cause with as much eloquence as that city chap, who was speaking to you this evening. Of course, I did not hear your conversation, but I can guess what the nature of it was, and I hope I have not delayed too long, Polly, before speaking to you, but I was waiting until I had a nice little home ready. I'm sure you must know that I have loved you for a long time, and I hope you care a little bit for me, Polly, and that you will consent to wait one more year for me," and his honest, manly face paled with emotion and anxiety, for he feared what her answer might be.

As for Polly, despite a little girlish vanity and ambition, to be a lady, she was at heart a true, sensible, loving-hearted little woman. In a kind of way she knew she was fond of Jack, and he of her, but she did not realize how much, until he had spoken to her, and now the truth burst upon her, she knew he loved her, truly, and devotedly, and a feeling of deep joy took possession of her, as her own love stood revealed to her in all its rosy beauty. Then, on the other hand, the picture which Stanley Howard had drawn for her, floated before her fancy, and the temptation to put from her this noble, true, and lasting love, and turn to the one who loved her only for her pretty face, assailed her strongly. She saw herself living in a whirlpool of fashion and pleasure, and she thought what matter if he did not always love her, she would have plenty of gaiety and fine friends to make up for it, but as she made an effort to tell him, her courage forsook her, and her heart, which was

very tender, failed her when she looked into the pale, anxious face, and saw the wistful pleading in the kind, grey eyes. Then she decided to give him the same answer she had given Stanley. She would wait until to-morrow to decide.

"Tell me that you are glad, Polly," he continued, "and that you will try and give me a little love in return for my great love for you."

"Yes, Jack," she answered, "I am glad you love me, and I love you too, but I am a little taken by surprise. I had no idea you cared so much, or that you wanted to marry me."

"Oh, Polly!" he murmured, his heart full of joy and gladness, "you have made me so happy. I feared, oh, I feared so much since I saw you together this evening, that Stanley Howard had won you from me, and if he were a good man and worthy to be your husband, I could bear it, for he can give you wealth and luxury, which I cannot, but dearest, you would not be happy with him, for, though you are a thousand times too good for him, you are not one of his class, and he would be the first to remind you of it when the fancy, which he calls by the name of love, would have passed away."

"Is it only because I'm pretty that you love me, Jack?" she asked.

"Ah, no, Polly, that would be but a poor love to offer you. I am proud and glad that you have a beautiful face, but, did anything happen to deprive you of that beauty, you would be dearer to me if possible, in your affliction than you are now in all your charming grace and beauty."

"Ah, that is love, real and earnest," she replied with a glad smile. "I should not care to be loved merely for having a pretty face."

"Nor would any true woman," he answered. "I love you just because you are Polly Neyle, your own dear, bright, little self with an honest, sweet soul, shining through those glorious, brown eyes."

"Why, Jack," she said, laughing, "I had no idea you had such pretty words at the tip of your tongue. You can beat Stanley Howard all to pieces," and her brown eyes danced with mischief.

"I feel furious when I think of that fellow making love to my promised wife," he said, "but he shan't do it again."

"I was not your promised wife then," she answered, "nor am I yet, if it comes to that."

"But you have told me that you love me a little, Polly, and that you are glad I love you, and, surely you would not tell me this if you meant to refuse me."

"I must wait till to-morrow, Jack," she replied, "before I answer you. It will only be a few more hours," and to all his entreaties she was firm. She would wait till to-morrow, and Jack was forced to go away, hoping for the best.

Long after he had gone, Polly remained in deep thought. She could not easily give up the only chance she had ever had of being a lady. If only Jack had not proposed so soon, but with the sweetness of "loves young dream" fresh upon her, filling her heart and flooding her soul with its rapturous beauty, she could not without a struggle, cast that love from her, nor wound the fond noble heart which loved her so truly. "I'll sleep on it," was the conclusion she at last came to. "Yes, I'll sleep on it, and I shall be calmer to-morrow, and better able to decide."

CHAPTER II.

It is near ten o'clock, and all the family, with the addition of a few neighbors, have gathered round the blazing yule log in Uncle Jacob's spacious kitchen.

A bit of a mystery was Uncle Jacob, as everyone called him, to all the inhabitants of this small village. He had lived amongst them almost as long as any of them could remember, and was always the same, grave-faced and reserved, but kind and gentle to everyone. He was a bachelor, and when his niece, Polly's mother, had died a year after her husband, he had taken the whole family of boys and girls to his home and heart. Polly, the eldest, was then only twelve. There were seven more, four boys and three girls. An elderly woman, a distant relative of Uncle Jacob, looked after the household affairs, and these comprised the whole family.

It had been the custom, to gather round the fire on Christmas Eve night, and listen to the wonderful stories told by Uncle Jacob, thrilling fairy tales, legends of Santa Claus, and stories of the good and bad little boys and girls, who hung up their stockings to receive his presents. To-night, Uncle Jacob was graver than usual, which caused some wonder amongst the young folks, for on Christmas Eve, the old man always unbent from his habitual reserve, and laughed and made merry with them all.

The two youngest of the children had gone to bed, after seeing that their stockings were hung in a conspicuous place, where they would be sure not to escape the notice of Santa Claus. Aunt Kitty, as she was called, busied about preparing some delicacies for the morrow's dinner. There was an eager demand now for a story from Uncle Jacob, who, looking searchingly into Polly's face, asked:

"Where is Jack Simmonds to-night? He always came on Christmas Eve."

"Polly blushed guiltily as she answered: "Jack seemed a little out of sorts this evening, Uncle Jacob, and as it is a long walk from his place, he decided to come over to-morrow morn-

ing instead, and spend the day with us." The truth was, she had forbidden him to come till the morrow so as to have no more distraction, whilst her mind was so upset.

The old man seemed satisfied at this, for Polly always spoke the truth, still an undercurrent of uneasiness hung round him.

"Well, you want a story?" he said at length, addressing the whole company.

"Yes, yes," they all cried eagerly. "A story please, Uncle Jacob."

"Very well then," he said. I shall tell you a true story to-night, no fiction this time. Perhaps it's rather a sad one for such a night, but there's a moral to it, and the cap may fit someone.

They all held their breaths, and gazed at him open-eyed, and open-mouthed, for each one felt that something out of the usual order was to fall from Uncle Jacob's lips. After a short pause he began:

"A long time ago, there lived in a small house, a few miles from St. John's city, a farmer, his wife and a daughter, whom we shall call Flossie. They were very poor, and had to work hard for their daily bread, but Nature had bestowed upon Flossie a wondrous gift, which no gold can purchase, the, alas, fatal gift of beauty.

"I will not describe her. No words of mine could do her justice, so I'll not try. Naturally, she had a sweetheart who loved her well, how well he loved her no words could tell. They were unspeakably happy in their mutual love, till the serpent entered their Eden.

There was a certain house in the city, where lived very wealthy people, who purchased from Flossie's mother, all the cream and fresh butter which she had to sell. A few times, both mother and daughter were engaged, when some extra house cleaning was going on. On one occasion their ring at the door was answered by a handsome young scamp, the son of the master of the house. Hal Dawson, as we shall call him, was as bad as he was handsome, but of course, poor Flossie did not know that. He was struck by her rare beauty, and conceived a great fancy for her. He had a smooth tongue and winning manner when he chose, and he stood speaking to them for some time. Flossie's mother, instead of resenting the open admiration bestowed upon her daughter, felt flattered

by it, and thought it condescending in so fine a gentleman to notice her at all. He found out where they lived, and said he was such a lover of the country, that he should visit them occasionally. He called a few days later, and with his glib tongue, worked himself into the good graces of Flossie's father, so that the simple minded man felt much pleased, and asked him to come again. Flossie accompanied him to the gate. It was early in the summer, and she was clad in a simple cotton gown, with a delicate rose fastened at her throat. "I shall take this rose, Miss Flossie," he said, "it will speak to me of you till I come again," and without waiting for her permission, with daring audacity, he reached for the flower.

"Poor Flossie blushed and stammered, not knowing whether it was the proper thing to refuse or not. Neither noticed the approach of Tom Winton, by which name we shall call Flossie's sweetheart, and before Hal Dawson had time to get possession of the rose, he was behind him. Flossie started when she caught sight of him, and Tom's powerful hand came down upon the delicate wrist of his rival, and swung him round with such force that he nearly fell to the ground.

"Take yourself off, young man," he said, in a stern voice, 'and don't you dare touch that flower.'

"At first, Hal Dawson was speechless from astonishment. Then like a flash it struck him that this must be Flossie's lover. 'Whew,' he exclaimed, 'jealous are you?' Then turning to the girl, with what he meant to be a bewitching smile, he asked, in a pleading tone. "May I not have the rose Miss Flossie?"

"No, Mr Dawson," she answered, in a cold voice. "It was wrong of me to think of allowing you to take it." Still he lingered, until Tom Winton, stepping between them, said: You've got your answer, and if you are a gentleman, you will take it and go." With these words, he took Flossie's arm and walked away with her.

As Hal Dawson left the spot, he muttered to himself: "I shall have a double motive now, for winning the little beauty; first for herself, and secondly, to spite that countrified jack-anapes, who presumes to dictate to me."

"That evening Tom Winton was obliged to say farewell to Flossie for a couple of months. It was just an offer which had been made him, to proceed to one of the near outports where he had a chance of earning a considerable amount of money. He hated to go and leave Flossie, but he reasoned it would

all the sooner enable him to make a home for themselves and so hasten their marriage.

"Flossie, darling," he said, when bidding her goodbye, "don't let that chap Dawson come near you any more, he is not fit company for you, and can certainly mean you no good." She promised him she would not, and so they parted.

"Hal Dawson soon learned of his departure, and right away began to improve his opportunities, and almost every evening saw him at Flossie's home. At first she avoided him, but, by dint of flattery, artfully offered, he won her to listen as Eve had listened long ago to the serpent in Paradise. He had artfully discovered the weakest spot in her nature, trading upon her love for rich dresses and jewelry, her ambition to be a lady, to live in a magnificent home, to have servants to wait upon her, carriages to ride in. All these he promised her. Her parents felt flattered and honored at the offer, and looked forward to a release from their hard toil when Flossie should be a grand lady, and so they encouraged her to break her plighted word to her lover, and sell herself for gold and ambition.

"The months of Tom Winter's absence had passed. He was due home any day and Hal Dawson tried to hurry on the marriage as speedily as possible, for he knew that Flossie's heart still belonged to the lover she had forsaken. On one particular evening, he had promised to bring her a gold locket and chain. He was an idler, depending only on what money he received from his father, and of late so many unpaid bills had come in, that Mr Dawson stopped his credit, so when he went to select the locket for Flossie, he was refused, unless he paid for it then.

"He flew home in a rage, went deliberately, to his mother's dressing room and possessed himself of a valuable gold locket and chain which she often wore. He found Flossie that evening in a state of nervous excitement, and upon asking her the cause, she told him that Tom Winton had arrived and every moment she expected to see him.

"Well, what of that," he asked, "allow me to deal with him."

"No, no," she answered, "not for worlds, I must tell him myself. I have treated him shamefully, and besides, you two would quarrel, and Tom might get into trouble. You must go now, and when he comes I must tell him that I cannot marry him, but I won't say anything about you yet."

"You won't play me false, Flossie, and make it up with Tom Winton again, will you?"

"No, I'll promise you I won't, only go before he comes."

Hal Dawson knew that all Flossie's anxiety was on Tom Winton's account, and he did not feel flattered by it. He also remembered the might and strength of Tom's arm on a former occasion and being at heart a coward, thought it wiser to take her advice. As he was leaving, he thought of the locket, and taking the case from his pocket, put it into her hands, saying:

"Here is the locket, I promised you. When you have recovered from your nervous attack, perhaps you may have time to look at it," and he went off in a huff.

"He was not long out of sight, when, on glancing through the window, she saw Tom Winton approaching. His face told of the joy and happiness which filled his heart. Oh, how she reproached herself for what she was doing. She still held the case containing the locket, in her hand. There was a large armchair with a cushion on it, in the room, and she hastily concealed the case under it. She had just done so when Tom entered. His arms were around her and, before she could stop him, his kisses were upon her cheek, and he was calling her all sorts of endearing names. Oh, how sweet it seemed to her. For the time, she wished that the past two months had never been, or that Tom had not gone away.

"Oh, how long these two months have been, darling," he murmured. "Have you missed me very much, I wonder?"

"Yes, Tom," she replied, "I have missed you a good deal," which was true. Then she tried to tell him but words failed her. She could not, standing there, face to face with him, stab that faithful heart. She would write him that night, she thought, after he had left her, and when the time came for him to go, she clung to him sobbing and crying, for she knew it was their last farewell.

"Poor Tom could not imagine what had unnerved her so, and tried to comfort and soothe her, saying he would be with her again on the morrow. As he was leaving the little garden to which she had accompanied him, he slipped something into her hand saying:

"Here is a little present I brought you, Flossie, I always knew you were fond of trinkets, and it tormented me that I could never give you anything nice. It is a gold locket and

chain; it is too dark to see it out here, you can look at it by and by."

"How strange," she thought, "two locket on the same night." A queer sensation came over her, and she hesitated in taking it.

"Would you rather something else?" he asked, noticing her hesitation. "I always heard you say that you would love a gold locket."

"Yes, but I've got one," she said unguardedly, then she looked a bit confused.

"Oh, have you?" he asked. "A present I suppose. Who gave it to you, Flossie?" and he looked at her anxiously.

"It's no matter," she answered, "I'll take this one now, I'll tell you some other time. You must go now, Tom, I do not feel well to-night," and she hurried him off.

Tom went away with a weight of sorrow at his heart, which he could not define. "What mystery was there about the locket which she had spoken of?" he wondered.

"When he had left her, Flossie entered the house, and threw herself into a chair. She had heard her mother's footsteps in the other room, and not wishing to be questioned, she slipped the case containing the locket, under the same cushion where she had put the first one.

"Has Hal gone?" asked her mother entering the room.

"Yes, mother," she answered, "are you going to bed?"

"I am," she replied. "Your father has gone hours ago. Are you going now, Flossie?"

"No," she answered, "I shall remain up for a while longer. Good night mother."

"Then came the turning point in Flossie's life. Her better, truer nature, cried out to marry the faithful, devoted lover in her own sphere of life. She realized how happy she might be in his love, but the evil one held before her mental vision more glaringly than ever, what her life would be like when she was a wealthy lady. She looked at her hands. They were small and shapely enough, but rather red and roughened from honest toil. In a few months, if she married Hal Dawson, they would become white and soft, and the sparkling rings would show off to advantage upon them. She thought till her brain grew tired, and finally, the tempter came off victorious. She would live for ambition. She would be the admired beauty of St. John's. She would lead a life of ease and gaiety. She

would write a few lines to Tom, and send them to him with the locket. She put her hand under the cushion, where she had placed them, and found to her dismay, that both cases were there. Which was Tom's gift? She had not opened the wrapper of either. She lighted a taper and examined them. One was new looking and much brighter than the other. Of course, the bright one must be Hal Dawson's, as he could afford to pay a much bigger price than Tom Winton.

"Poor Tom," she murmured, "I would love it more than the other one though it were not one tenth of the value." She kissed it in mute farewell. She then wrote a short note telling him she must return his gift, as circumstances which had occurred of late prevented her from being his wife. She begged him to forget her, and look for some other girl more worthy than herself, and not on any account to seek another interview with her, as her decision was final. Early next morning she sent a messenger with them.

"Next evening, Hal Dawson made his appearance. He had kept his intended marriage with Flossie, a secret from his parents, fearing they would try to prevent it. He found Flossie seated under a tree in the tiny garden, looking most beautiful in a white frock, and wearing a gold locket and chain. He knew at a glance that it was not the one he had given her, and wondered that he had not seen her wear it before.

"Did the jilted lover turn up last night?" he asked.

"I will not have him spoken of in this manner," cried Flossie, indignantly. "I respect and esteem him too much, and I only trust he will get a better woman for his wife than I am. Yes, he came. I wrote him this morning and returned a locket and chain which he brought me last night, strange that you should both bring the same thing on the same night."

"You returned it?" he repeated, looking at the locket which she wore on her neck.

"Yes, she said, 'I returned it, or one of them. I suppose it was the right one. Is not this the one you gave me?'"

"He scarcely knew what made him answer, 'yes, that's the one I gave you,' but the mind of a bad man, is always a fair field for the devil's labor, and a thought leapt into his brain that, perhaps he could make something of this mistake, to Tom's disadvantage.

"When Tom Winton read Flossie's letter, he was speechless from grief and despair. He tossed the case containing

the locket, into a drawer, without removing the wrapper. He grew frantic, and plunged into a whirl of dissipation. He gambled, drank heavily, until all his hard earned money had vanished.

His comrades, during this time, were of a very questionable character. During that week, a daring robbery had been committed at the house of Mr Dawson, and some of Tom's late associates were suspected. Some jewelry, together with some loose money had been taken. On the last day of the week, Tom found he had no money left to join his companions at the gambling table, and after long consideration, he took the parcel containing the locket, determined to sell it.

"What does she care," he thought, "and why should I, she never wore it anyway, and I've nothing to venerate it for, and if I keep it, it will only serve to remind me of what a fool I've been," and putting it into his pocket, he started for the jeweller's store. The jeweller had received his instructions. He kept the locket, sent for an officer, and Tom, with the rest of the gang, was arrested for the crime. The locket was identified by Mrs Dawson as her property. Tom was aware that Flossie had often helped in the Dawson family when an extra share of work was to be done. He knew she loved jewelry, that she had sent him the locket in mistake, and he remembered her confusion, when she had unwittingly spoken of possessing another locket, and her refusal to explain. He knew nothing of her intended marriage with Hal Dawson, and what could he think? With bitter grief, and despair at his heart, he cried: "There is no need for a trial, officer, do your duty, I plead guilty." He was convicted of the whole theft. He made no defense, and was sentenced to a year's imprisonment. Alone, in his prison cell, Tom had time to review the past, and he upbraided himself for not opening the case when he received it, as he would certainly have gone to Flossie, and would have solved the mystery.

"My darling will know why I have done it," he said, "when she discovers the mistake."

One day, during his term of imprisonment, he had seen her. He was out working on the road, when she rolled by in her pride and her carriage." He looked up quickly and recognized her, it was only an instant, but he had a vague remembrance of a lily white face, a waft of perfume, and then—a cloud of dust.

When he was released from prison, he returned to the little seagirt village, and worked at the same business in which he had been engaged a few years before, when he went to make a home for Flossie, and there he toiled till he became an old man.

You are waiting for me to tell you that Flossie's villain of a husband died, and she married Tom, and they lived happily ever after, but no such thing happened. I am sorry if I have made you all feel gloomy with my sad story, there should be no sadness to-night, and maybe it's a jig I'll be dancing you in the morning."

They all laughed heartily at the idea of grave-faced Uncle Jacob dancing a jig, "and now I'll be wishing you all a good morning, for its long past midnight, and high time to be in bed," and they all went off but Polly.

"Sitting in deep thought, Polly?" said Uncle Jacob. "I've reserved the sequel of my story for you alone. When Tom Winton had lived five years in the village in which he had taken refuge, he was sitting alone one night, when a knock came at the door. He opened it, and what was his amazement to see Flossie standing outside. One glance at her told him all. She had been wrecked on ambition's tide. Her beautiful face, was wan and white as the snow outside; gone were the tempting dimples from the once rounded cheeks, dim was the once merry light of her eyes.

"Flossie," he cried, drawing her inside the door.

"Tom, oh Tom," and her voice broke into sobs and tears. "I have come to ask your forgiveness on my bended knees. Let me tell you all. Oh, I know now what a heart and what a love I have lost. I know what you have suffered for worthless me; but I did not know until a week ago."

She told him the whole story of Hal Dawson, and why she had married him. "When I heard that you had gone to prison, my repentance began, and I have not known a happy hour since. I thought that my heartless conduct had made you reckless and that you were guilty. I would have broken off my engagement, only that my parents urged me so strongly not to do so. At first my husband was kind to me, but his mother almost ignored me from the first day I entered the house. His father though, was always kind and lenient towards me. Before I had been one month married, I knew I had made a great mistake. I was not fitted for my companions, nor my surround-

ings. I was shy in company, and always did the wrong thing, and they all laughed at me. I was not educated, I could not play, nor paint, nor draw. I had not read any of the books they were always speaking of. I could not converse upon the affairs of the world. I spoke ungrammatically, and in a short time my husband was ashamed of me, and made no secret of it. Then he began to neglect me. He drank, and stayed out at night. His mother was constantly telling me that I had ruined her son's life. One night, a week ago, I had, had words with my husband. We were in my dressing room, and he took up this locket (she was wearing it then) and told me the whole history of it, that he worked the plot to injure you, though he himself was the thief; 'but,' he said, 'I did not dream he would fall into the trap so easily, nor that he was such a fool.' 'I told him that, one so base as he, could not understand the nobility of a nature like yours; it was above and beyond him. I grew frantic, I said so much to him that he struck me in the face. Maddened with rage at the cowardly blow, I rushed from the house and fled to my parents. A steamer was leaving for here next morning, and I took passage by her. I know I have not long to live, my health is failing lately, and I want to receive your pardon, Tom, before I die.'

He took both her hands, now so thin, and soft, and white, in one of his, and placed the other on her head, whilst he fully and freely forgave her.

"And where is he now, Uncle Jacob," Pollie asked, "is he living or dead?"

"He stands before you, Polly, in the person of Uncle Jacob."

"Is it possible? Poor Uncle Jacob," she murmured, fondly caressing his cheek. "What an unhappy life you've had, and where is Flossie?" He drew her to the window; the moon was flooding the snow-clad earth with her brilliant light.

"Look out there to yonder churchyard, where the white monuments gleam in the moonlight. Do you notice a large, white cross, taller than the others?"

"Yes," she answered, in an awestruck whisper.

"Well, he replied, "Neath that cross, lies all that is mortal of Flossie. She was taken ill that night and died in a week. No one objected, and I had her buried here, and placed that cross on her resting place. Her husband married again a year after. Do you see the moral to my tale, child? Does

the cap fit you, Polly? A good man seeks your love. You love him. A ne'er-do-well, like his grandfather,—for, let me tell you, he is the grandson of Hal Dawson,—seeks you because you have a pretty face, which he has taken a fancy to.

Be wise, child, and do not court the same fate as poor, unhappy Flossie."

Polly was sobbing now. "Oh, Uncle Jacob," she cried, "how thankful I am that you saved me from my folly. I shall tell Stanley Howard, that I have promised myself to a better man"

That morning, as the villagers were coming from church, Jack Simmonds met Polly, who told him, that as far as she could do it his Christmas would be happy, for, she intended to wait the year for him, and ten more if he wished it." She felt repaid, when she saw the glad, happy smile on his honest face as he called her, his "beautiful darling, the queen of his heart."

A little further on, they came face to face with Stanley Howard, who requested a private conversation with Polly.

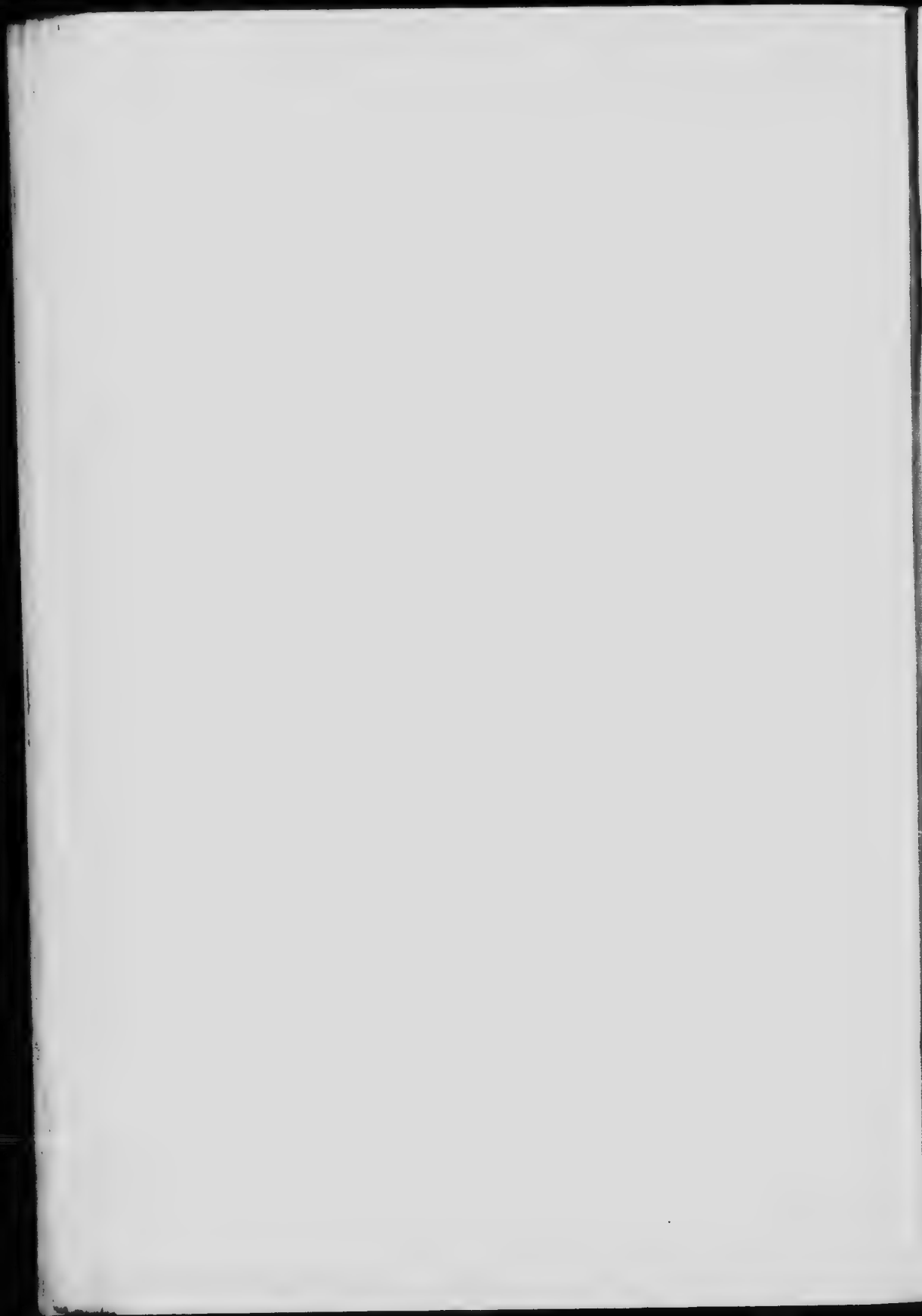
"If it's only an answer to what you asked me yesterday, Mr Howard," she said, "Jack can hear it, for I've promised to marry him."

Then remembering Uncle Jacob's wrong, at the hands of his grandfather, she added, "and he is a better man, and will make me a far better husband than you would."

Raising his hat, Stanley Howard walked away in silence.

His vanity received a greater stab than his heart, and let us hope, that he has profited by his experience.

THE END.



A Harmless Deception.

CHAPTER I.

THE Christmas snow is slowly falling, not drifting and whirling in fierce gusts, but slowly and gracefully floating down in its unsullied purity, covering road and by-way, tree and house-top, with its soft feathery mantle, till nothing is visible outside but a white world. From the window of a wealthy suburban residence, in St. John's city, a young girl of twenty, gazes out upon the peaceful scene. She is slight and graceful, with a bright, beautiful face, on which is portrayed too much pride and sensitiveness, for her own happiness.

Her thoughts are with the past, and she pictures a different Christmas Eve from this one, when a loving mother, a kind father were there to share with her the joy of the holy, festive season. Both are dead, and she is now an inmate of her uncle's household, Richard Huntley, who, with his wife and two daughters, are her only relatives. An unwelcome addition she is to the family circle, and well she knows it. Often her heart rebelled against the taunts and unkindness, she so often receives from her cousins and aunt.

Her heart is rebelling now, for, though it is nine o'clock at night, and they live in a lonely part of the city, she has been told that she must go to Water Street to purchase a particular kind of silk blouse which is needed for the morrow. That she has been there three times already the same day, does not trouble them.

As the door opens quickly, she dashes away the tears from her eyes and turns round. A tall, well-dressed woman of about fifty enters.

"Here Lena," she says, "is the money. Ella says to get as delicate a shade of pink as you possibly can, and hurry because it is getting late, your uncle may have a visitor with him when he returns, and there are still some little things to be seen to before midnight."

Without a word the girl takes the money, and turning up the collar of her coat, departs on her errand.

Meanwhile, Mrs Huntley retires to the drawing room, and throws herself into a cushioned armchair, drawn up to the fire. Her two daughters, who have just put the finishing touches to the Christmas decorations, are sitting a little distance away, fearing that the heat of the fire might spoil their complexions. Both are tall and good-looking, but of very uncertain age.

The Huntleys moved in the best St. John's society. Both girls might have married long ago, but they were not of the type who marry for love, and the eligibles were scarce. A few months before, Mr. Huntley had paid a visit to an old friend of his, who was living in New York, and whilst there, won a promise from the son that he would spend the coming Christmas with him in Newfoundland, and he was expected to arrive to-night. Lena had been spending three months with a school friend, in one of the outports, and only arrived in town a week before Christmas, so knew nothing of the intended visitor.

"What a sullen disposition Lena has," remarked Mrs. Huntley. "She did not deign to answer me one word just now, when I gave the message about your blouse, Ella."

"That girl should be made to feel her dependence more than she does," answered Ella, who was the elder of the two sisters.

"She shows no gratitude for what has been done for her," remarked her sister Maude.

"It is not every girl whose father died and left her penniless, would be offered a nice home like this," said Mrs. Huntley.

"It is a great mistake, mamma, and a drawback to our prospects, to have Lena living in the same house with us. Of course, she is younger, and people seem to think prettier, and then she has such a natural talent for claiming the attention of the male sex, that, humiliating as it is to acknowledge it, we are neglected when she is by. I do wish she had remained

away till Charlie Fane's visit was over. She has heard nothing of his coming, mamma, has she?"

"I just mentioned to her now, that a visitor may arrive with her uncle. I did not say from where."

"We must try and keep her in the back ground as much as possible," said Maude. "Papa says that Mr. Fane is worth ever so much money. Do you know at what hour the Silvia is due, Ella?"

"The papers say about twelve," she answered. "Of course, papa will wait and bring him in."

Meanwhile, Lena walked on towards town. The snow, falling so softly and peacefully down, had a soothing effect upon her, and, by degrees, the swelling indignation, melted from her heart. It was Christmas, the time of peace and good will, and she resolved to lay aside all unkind and bitter thoughts, and do her best to be happy, and make others so.

Water Street was dazzling. The shops were ablaze with lights. Gold and silver flashed in brilliant array, from jewellers' windows; everything bright and rich looking gleamed forth from those of the other stores, and all that could please the palate and sharpen the appetite, was temptingly arranged in the grocery and fruit stores. Throngs of people rushed hither and thither.

Lena was young and buoyant, and soon all weariness and unpleasantness were forgotten, and her spirits rose, as she mingled with the merry moving mass of humanity. She had much difficulty in getting the blouse the exact shade which was required. She tried every shop, from the West to the East End, and she began to fear she would have to return without it, when, to her relief, she found the very shade for which she was seeking.

She had also purchased a pretty Christmas card for a friend of her's, and thought that, as she was not very far from the place, she would go and leave it at the door. True, it was a lonely spot; but she decided to take Water Street until she got right opposite the house before she turned up. When she came to the unfrequented part of the street, she glanced timidly around, feeling a little nervous, for it was now near ten o'clock.

She held, by a chain in her hand, a small purse which contained her money, and, as she quickly turned a corner leading to the next street, a man, who was leaning against a

door, and seemed to have imbibed too freely, rushed quickly out, and, snatching the purse from her hand, dashed past her.

Lena gave a cry of terror and looked helplessly around.

In a moment, she saw a tall, manly form stride past her in pursuit of the drunken ruffian, and in a few seconds, he had him by the collar. Wrenching the purse from his hand, he then flung him to the sidewalk, saying: "Only that I cannot see a policeman about, I would give you in charge."

He then walked back to Lena, and raising his hat, said: "Permit me to restore your property. I fear that scamp has given you a severe fright. It was quite fortunate, that I happened to be on the spot, and saw him snatch the purse from your hand."

As he gazed upon the girl's face, he thought—even in the uncertain light—that he had never seen one to compare with it. Some dark curls had escaped from under her hat, and on them a few feathery snowflakes had found a resting place; her cheeks were flushed from her walk, and a pair of large, dark eyes, eloquent with gratitude, looked up at him.

Lena knew that he was a stranger, for he had the unmistakable American accent. She liked his face; not that it was handsome, but it was one that she could trust. He had a pair of honest blue eyes; was light complexioned, with a golden brown moustache.

"It was indeed most fortunate for me," she answered; "not that my purse contains very much. I should not have come down here so late. Thank you a thousand times!"

"It is a great mistake, to be out alone at this hour," he said, with a very grave face; "it would not do if you were living in New York."

"Oh, you are from New York, then!" she remarked.

"Yes," he replied; "I just landed from the *Silvia*, and I rejoice at the impulse which prompted me to do so, since I am so lucky as to be of service to you. The gentleman, to whom I have come, was to have met me, but we have arrived somewhat earlier than was expected, and I suppose he is not aware of it; so, being Christmas Eve, I thought I would take a stroll up Water Street, and have a look at the stores."

"Thank you again, so much," said Lena, "but," as he seemed to linger, "don't you think you ought to hurry back to the steamer, your friend may now be looking for you there?"

"I could not dream of leaving you alone, and unprotected at this hour," he said. "You must allow me the privilege of accompanying you to your door."

"Oh, I could not think of troubling you so much," said Lena, "I shall be quite safe now, thank you."

"I am not so sure of that," he replied; "who knows but that scamp may be on the look-out, and follow you."

This was what she herself feared, but still she remonstrated: "You may miss your friend."

"That makes no difference," he answered; "I have his address, and can go there. I trust you will pardon me, young lady, if I say that I must insist on seeing you safely home, for I feel it my duty to do so."

The ring of genuineness in his voice, and the deep, respectful reverence of his demeanor, gave Lena the feeling that she was quite safe, and, with a sense of newly-awakened pleasure stirring in each heart, they walked on side by side. They conversed quite pleasantly, and at perfect ease during the walk. Once Lena shook out the very thin paper bag which held her cousin's silk blouse, saying, "I fear the snow will melt through this paper and spoil the silk."

"Give it to me," he said, "I have a long, loose pocket in this overcoat, and can put it in without crushing it," and he took it gently from her hand. "There," he said, laughing, "you did not think when buying this, that a stranger from New York would bring it home for you. Perhaps you may give me a thought sometimes when you wear it, if it is anything wearable."

Lena laughed softly, as she said: "I'll never wear it; it isn't mine at all." "And you took the trouble to go all this distance so late to buy it for someone else. You must be very obliging."

"No, I'm not one bit obliging. I stormed and raged inwardly at having to come, though outwardly, I was quite calm."

"Will you think me very unkind, if I say I'm glad you came," he asked.

"I will," she answered archly, "and I will also think you very unwise to say such a thing." "Why?" "Because I'm sure it's not true. I know you are storming and raging inwardly, at being forced to perform such an onerous duty."

He looked at her a moment, and then said, "I will not

argue the point now." "No," she retorted, "you have not time, for here we are at the door. Thank you so much," she said, holding out her hand, "and a merry Christmas to you."

He took it, and said: "Well, I won't say I'm sorry the journey is ended, for you may tell me I'm fibbing again, but—and he looked up at the house—"I shall see you again, unless you forbid me." "I certainly shall not be so ungenerous," she answered, "when you have been so kind."

"My name," he said, "is Charlie Fane, at your service; would it be too presumptuous in me to ask yours?" "I'll tell you half of it," she said, with a touch of coquetry, "it is Eleanor," giving her full name, instead of the abbreviation, Lena. "That will do," he replied. "I'm thankful for half; it is a sweet name."

Lena laughed. "Why do you laugh?" he asked. "Because," she answered, "if I had said it was Judy, you would say the same thing."

He smiled, in spite of himself. "Do not tell me the name of your street," he said, "or the number of your house. I'll find it out. It may prove to you, if I take a little trouble to see you, that I am possessed of more sincerity, than you give me credit for."

"That's a bargain," she cried, gaily, "but I'll bet you won't find me." "We shall see," he answered. "Shall you find your way back," she asked, her mood changing to grave seriousness, "I almost forgot that you are in a strange city?"

He laughed musically, as he said; "Oh, trust an old dog for a hard road. I'm quite used to strange cities. I daresay my friend will have found out about the arrival of the Silvia by the time I get there. Good-night, and a happy Christmas to you," as he raised his hat, and strode off.

As Lena entered, she was met in the hallway by Mrs. Huntley. "What a time you have been, Lena," she said, crossly; "go up to Ella's room, she is waiting to try on the blouse."

Lena had removed her hat, and was just divesting herself of her coat, when, to her dismay, she remembered that the blouse was in Charlie Fane's pocket; and, oh,—what was she to say. Of course, when he discovered it, she felt sure that he would bring it to her immediately; but how, in the meantime, could she explain things. She would not go into all the details of what had happened. It was certainly a harmless deception, but could she have foreseen all the unpleasantness

that would arise from it, she would never have practised it. She was certainly in an awkward plight, and, acting on the impulse of the moment, said: "I have not got the blouse Aunt Emily, but I will have it to-morrow. I left it somewhere to keep it from getting wet, and forgot it". "You have not got it." "And where did you leave it? Did you lose it?" "No, aunt, I have not lost it. All I can say is that Ella will have her blouse to-morrow. Here is the change," she said, taking some money from her purse, and handing it to her. "Well!" exclaimed Mrs Huntley, "if this is not cool impertinence, never mind it."

Ella and Maude, hearing voices in the hall, came down stairs. "I've had a long wait for my blouse," pouted the former.

"It seems, you are to have a longer one," said her mother. "She has bought your blouse, Ella, my dear, and lost it." "Lost it," echoed the two girls. "I did not say I lost it," said Lena, the indignant blood mounting to her forehead. "No, because you are not truthful enough, I suppose," said Ella Huntley.

"How dare you!" exclaimed Lena. Then, turning to Mrs. Huntley, she said: "Aunt Emily, as I find I am only subjected to insult by remaining, I will go to my room. I have told you that the blouse is safe, and you shall have it to-morrow. I can say no more." And she ran quickly upstairs, before the passionate burst of tears escaped her in their presence.

About eleven o'clock, Mr. Huntley and the visitor arrived. Lena, standing at her window, was the first to see them, and knew at a glance, that Mr Huntley's companion was her champion of the night. She descended the stairs and stood at the door. The light from the hall revealed her face, and, to his astonishment, Charlie Fane recognized her.

"Well, Lena, my dear," said Mr Huntley, "have you come down to welcome the stranger. Here he is. Mr Charlie Fane, this," he said, turning to the young man, "is my niece, Lena Huntley."

They shook hands and exchanged glances of amusement. "So I found you," he whispered. "Ah, but only by chance," she answered. "Lucky chance," he said. "Quick," she murmured, "now," glancing at her uncle, who was removing his overcoat. He understood her, and hastily drawing the parcel from his pocket, slipped it into her hands. "What a blockhead,

"I was," he said in a low voice. She smiled, and running quickly to her room, threw it on the bed, and was down again by the time Charlie Fane and her uncle were entering the drawing-room. All the unpleasantness was now forgotten; her hero was there in the house. If she had only told him her name, all the disagreeableness would have been avoided. Her aunt and cousins frowned upon her behind the visitor's back, but she did not mind them. When it was near midnight, and supper over, they separated for the night, Mr Huntley saying, that their young guest must feel tired after his long voyage.

Lena is standing again at her window, thinking of what a happy Christmas it has turned out to be after all. It had stopped snowing and she wanted to hear the bells, when they ushered in the Christmas morn. Suddenly, she remembered the blouse which lay upon the bed. She took it from the paper bag and shook it out fearing it might be wrinkled. As she did so, a light knock came upon the door, which was immediately opened and Mrs Huntley entered. Lena quickly dropped the blouse upon the bed, and turned part of the counterpane over it, but not before the quick eye of her aunt had caught sight of it, and hastily turning back the coverlet, she demanded, in angry tones, as she held it up: "Pray explain, what this means. Why are you hiding my daughter's property? Why did you pretend you had not got it?"

"I did not pretend anything," answered Lena. "I had not got it then. How, or where I got it makes no difference, since, as you see, it is quite safe."

"This explanation does not satisfy me, Lena Huntley," said her aunt. She left the room for a moment, and summoned her two daughters, to whom she told all. Lena stood with her arm leaning on the bureau, a look of indifference upon her face. "Did you intend appropriating it to your own use?" demanded Ella. "Will you please explain!" "I will explain nothing," answered Lena.

Stung to anger, by the girl's seeming indifference, and heartily wishing that something would happen, to take her away from the house during Charlie Fane's visit, Mrs. Huntley said: "Then nothing remains for us, but to suspect you of having pretended to lose the blouse, and, when the fuss had blown over, taking it to the store again, and getting the worth of it for yourself." The girl's face grew pale to the lips at the insult and her eyes blazed. "You must remember, that by your

silence you place yourself under suspicion," she continued, "and whilst you keep so, you must find another home. We will make arrangements after to-morrow. Come girls!" and they left the room.

Lena stood like one dazed. Was it possible that she, Lena Huntley, was accused of dishonesty, and called a common thief by her own relations! Her first impulse, was to seek her uncle and tell him all, as he had always been kind to her; her second, was to fly from the place forever. How dared they do it? she passionately asked herself. She dressed quickly, and unheard by anyone, descended the stairs, and noiselessly opened the hall door. She stood for a moment irresolute. Where could she go at that hour? Over the snow-clad hills, and through the frosty air came the musical peal of the bells, breathing their message of peace and gladness to all, speaking to each human heart of charity and forgiveness, of pity and love, of good-will towards men; but no peace found a place in her stormy, passionate, rebellious heart now. She felt bitterest anger, bitterest indignation, against her kinsfolk, and this was her Christmas, which, a short time ago, she thought was going to be so happy: alone on a lonely road at midnight, not knowing where to go, accused of dishonesty, and by a great condescension permitted to remain under her uncle's roof till they found a suitable place for her. Ah! did they think for a moment that she would tamely submit; that she would accept, for one hour, the shelter of this house after such an accusation. Suddenly, she thought of an old woman living some distance further on, who had but one grand-daughter living with her. She was called Granny Doran, and was always fond of Lena, whom she had known in happier times. So Lena decided to seek shelter there for a few days, till she could make other arrangements. She found the old woman at her door, listening to the "merry bells of Yule," for, as she said, "it may be the last time I shall ever hear them."

"Mercy on us! cried Granny Doran, as Lena came up to the door, "what is the matter, child?"

"I have come to spend Christmas with you, granny, if you will have me," said the girl. "I have quarrelled with my aunt, and I'm never going back again."

"And right glad I am to have you dearie," said warm-hearted Granny Doran. "Come in, you must be half frozen. I'll get you a hot cup of tea, and the best bed in the house is yours,

as long as you wish to stay. I always said the Huntley's were not half kind enough to you."

Many young men and maidens, living near Granny Doran, often went to her to have their fortunes told, and when Lena had finished her tea, the old woman proceeded to "toss the cup", in the endeavour to cheer her up a bit, and predicted for her a speedy marriage with a tall, handsome man, when she should be robed in white, with veil and orange blossoms.

CHAPTER II.

About nine o'clock on Christmas morning at Huntley's, all sat down to breakfast. Charlie Fane looked longingly towards the door, expecting every moment to see the face of which he had dreamed all night. When her absence was commented upon by Mr. Huntley, his wife remarked that, "she must be taking an extra long nap this morning." "That is unlike her," he said, "she is always an early riser."

Soon after breakfast, Mrs. Huntley and her daughters, discovered the girl's flight, and feared the consequences if Mr. Huntley found out the truth; so when seated at dinner, Mrs. Huntley told him that Lena had gone to spend a few days of Christmas with a friend. "Strange that she should wish to leave us on Christmas Day," remarked Mr. Huntley, "I do not like it."

Charlie Fane sang and laughed, and talked with the Misses Huntley, till they thought him charming. When nine o'clock came, he could stand it no longer, and he managed to slip out unseen by anyone. The night was bright and fine; he lit a cigar and began a brisk walk on the road. He felt pained beyond measure that Lena should treat him like this. He walked on till he came to Granny Doran's house; a light gleamed from the window, and he stood watching it for some time. As he gazed, he saw a hand raise a corner of the blind, and a face

looked out. His heart gave a great bound, as he recognized Lena. In a moment, he was at the door, and she ran out to meet him. "Answer me one question, Miss Huntley," he said. "Did you leave your uncle's house to avoid me?" Lena answered, "No." She did not tell him everything; only that she had quarrelled, and she was not going back. So, every night for the next week, he managed to go out alone, and Granny Doran's was his destination.

Soon, he and Lena discovered the same thing: that one could not live without the other. One night he bade her good-bye for two or three days, as he was obliged to keep a solemn promise made to his mother before leaving New York, which was, that he would visit a particular friend of her's who was living in Harbor Grace, to which place his mother belonged.

Over a week had passed, and he did not return. During all this time the Huntley's endeavored, without avail, to discover Lena's whereabouts; Charlie having, at her request, kept silent about her. Mr. Huntley was much annoyed and puzzled at her behaviour.

One night, a servant of Mrs. Huntley's, dropped in to Granny Doran's, to have her fortune told. Granny "cut the cards," and told the girl that she was going to a wedding. "Oh, that's true," she answered. "We are to have one at the house to-morrow night. Miss Ella is to be married to Mr. Fane. He is in Harbor Grace, but he will be home to-morrow." Lena, who was in the next room, heard all, and her faith in mankind died. "And so," she thought, "he was but amusing himself with me after all."

"You heard, dearie. I know," said Granny Doran, coming into the room when the girl had gone, "but wait a bit. I don't care if the wedding is arranged a thousand times, there's a hitch somewhere. I have not used my eyes for nothing, and that young man is honest. I'd stake my life on it."

Next morning, as Lena was sitting near the window looking over the want-column in the morning paper, a sleigh drove up, and Charlie Fane got out, walked slowly, and with a slight halt, up the pathway to the door. Granny was out, also her grand-daughter, so Lena went to the door. She was determined not to betray herself in any way. "Good morning, Mr. Fane," she said, drawing back as Charlie opened his arms, "I hope you enjoyed your visit to Harbor Grace." He looked both hurt and puzzled. "You are aware of how I enjoyed my-

self, Lena," he answered; "this does not look much like amusement," and he pointed to his foot, on which he was still limping, then showed his hand which was bound with linen.

"Have you hurt yourself?" she asked; "I am sorry." "Did not my letter explain all, Lena?" he said. "I received no letter," she answered; "but of course I make all allowances. A man who is preparing for his wedding, cannot have much time for letter writing, and I think it is with your intended bride you should now be instead of here."

"My intended bride!" he repeated. "What are you saying, Lena? You are my intended bride, if you will make me happy by being so. I wrote you, begging that you would be prepared to marry me to-night, as a few days ago, I received a cable message informing me that unforeseen, and important business connected with our firm, required my immediate presence in New York. I cannot delay longer than to-morrow, and, Lena, darling, I wrote, explaining all this to you, for I cannot leave Newfoundland without you. I could not come sooner, for the day after I arrived in Harbor Grace, I was thrown from a sleigh while driving. My foot caught in the runners, spraining my ankle severely. I also hurt my wrist, so that it was with much difficulty, I managed to write a short letter to you. I wanted to give you a little time to be prepared for our marriage to-night."

As he spoke, all Lena's faith in him was restored, and she laughed at herself for doubting him. "Perhaps you do not know, Charlie," she said, drawing nearer to him, "that we are out of the city limits, and our letters are not brought to us," "Oh!" he said, "that explains it."

"I am sorry you have suffered so much," said Lena, with sweet, womanly pity and love, shining from her eyes, and then she told him of what she had heard on the previous night.

Charlie only laughed, saying, Ella Huntley may be getting married to-night, but it is not to me. I have not written one of them a line since I left." "It is strange," murmured Lena. Then a suspicion flashed across her mind, and she said, "Tell me; how did you address my letter?"

"Miss Eleanor Huntley, No. 14—Road."

"Why, that is Ella's name also. We are both named 'Eleanor,' but our abbreviations are different."

"I did not know your cousin's name was Eleanor," he said, and they looked at each other for a moment.

"They do not know at Huntley's that I am here. They

always send for their letters; and, oh, Charlie, do you know what has happened? Ella thought the number was only a mistake on your part, and that the letter was for her, and she is prepared to marry you to-night. Good gracious, Lena, do not picture such a catastrophe. I would not wish such a thing to happen for worlds. How could I ever face Mr Huntley again?"

"Well, you are free; go and marry her to-night, and everything will be straight; I shall not mind much," said Lena.

I don't believe you would; but I do, and I would not marry her, if you were never in the question."

"I was only trying you, Charlie," she replied, smiling fondly up at him. He smiled back, and both were content.

"Our stupid mistake about the blouse on Christmas Eve, and my deception afterwards, has caused all this unpleasantness," said Lena, and she told him all about it.

"It is a terrible piece of business," he said, growing quite serious; "how am I ever to explain to them."

"You should go there right away, before things go any further," she said.

"Go there! why, I'd rather face a ravenous wolf."

"Do you know what, Charlie?" said Lena. "I am the cause of all this trouble; if I had explained all to them that night, this would have been avoided, and now I will take it upon myself to smooth out things as well as can be."

"Heaven bless you, Lena, you are an angel!" exclaimed the young man delightedly.

"In some cases, men are moral cowards, and this is one of them.

So Lena wrote a note to her uncle, requesting him to come to her, which he did, and then she explained everything to him. He was pained beyond measure, at the humiliation his daughter would have to endure, but, in his own mind, had to acknowledge that she deserved it. "If there is anything which I can do to make this mistake less painful to Ella, I am willing to do it, uncle," said Lena.

The rage, mortification, and indignation of Ella Huntley, when she heard her father's explanation, can be better imagined than described. "I'll sue him for breach of promise," she declared, when Mr. Huntley had left the room. "To think of that sly, manoeuvring girl, having the laugh on me like this. I can never live and stand it. I'll die with mortification," and she burst into a storm of tears.

A timid little knock came upon the door. It was opened gently, and Lena entered. In her great happiness, her generous heart was ready to forget and forgive anything. She felt her cousin's great humiliation, and would not be in her place for untold gold. She went to her, and threw her arms round her, saying: "Oh, Ella, I would give anything to undo all this. I am to blame for it all, but I was too proud and stubborn to explain to you that night. Of course, I know none of you meant the things you said; it was only because you were vexed with me."

"It is all very well for you, Lena Huntley, to come here now, when it is too late to undo what you have done," cried the miserable girl, rising to her feet, "I shall be the talk of the town."

"No, no, Ella, I can fix everything, if you will only listen to me. No one but ourselves need ever know of this mistake. There have been no invitations sent?" "No," answered Ella.

"You have had no time to get any dresses made?" "No, only a veil and orange blossoms were ordered."

Well," went on Lena, "the veil and orange blossoms were ordered for Miss Huntley, and I am Miss Huntley. The servants could be told, that you all knew I was to be married when Mr. Fane returned, and that it was only for a joke, you pretended it was yourself, and I can wear the veil and orange blossoms if you will permit me."

And how am I to explain to Mr. Fane?" asked Ella.

"Tell him, you did not intend to accept him; laugh at the fun about the mistake of the letter, and prove your indifference by acting as my bridesmaid." Lena had not the heart to tell her that he knew all

"Are you sure you will never inform on me?" asked Ella Huntley doubtfully. "I pledge you, my word of honor, Ella," she replied, earnestly, "that he shall never hear the slightest allusion to it from me." And they knew her well enough to believe her word.

And so the wedding took place at Mr. Huntley's house, and Lena, true to Granny Doran's prediction, was robed in white, with veil and orange blossoms. Ella Huntley was bridesmaid, and all went "merry as a marriage bell."

THE END.

**REGULATIONS MADE BY THE BOARD OF
TRADE, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE COM-
MISSIONERS OF CUSTOMS, UNDER SEC-
TION 50 OF THE MERCHANT SHIPPING
ACT, 1906.**

Under the provisions of Section 50 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1906, the Board of Trade, in conjunction with the Commissioners of Customs, hereby make the following Regulations relating to ship's names, and direct that they shall come into force on 1st January, 1908:

1.—Any person who proposes to make application for the Registry of a British Ship shall give notice in writing of the proposed name of the ship to the Registrar of Shipping at the intended Port of Registry at least fourteen days before the date on which it is contemplated to effect the registry.

7.—When it is proposed to register the ship at a port not situated in the British Islands, the Registrar to whom the name is intimated may proceed with the registry of the ship if he satisfies himself that the name does not appear in the Current Mercantile Navy List; but if the name does so appear, the Registrar shall transmit the application to the Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen, and the case shall be treated in the manner laid down for registry in the British Islands.

H. W. LEMESSURIER.
Registrar of Shipping.



PUBLIC NOTICE.

Inspection of Weights and Measures.

The following sections of the Weights and Measures Act, passed during the recent session of the Legislature, are published for general information.

R. WATSON,
Colonial Secretary.

Dept. Colonial Secretary, May 10, 1912.

No manufacturer of or Dealer in Weights or Measures who has in his possession for sale any weight or measure shall be bound to have the same inspected and stamped hereunder, so long as the same remains in his manufactory, store or warehouse, but no such weight or measure shall be removed from his premises, sold or taken into use for trade, without being inspected or stamped, and any such dealer or manufacturer who permit any such weight or measure to be removed from his premises, sold or taken into use for trade, without being inspected and stamped, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding fifty dollars: Provided that no weight or measure so inspected and stamped shall require any other inspection or stamping within twelve months.

All fresh meats imported for sale, and all hay imported for sale in screwed or pressed packages, shall be weighed by the vendor, who shall attach to each piece of meat and package of hay a ticket marked with the weight thereof, and such meats and packages purchased shall be reweighed by the vendor in the presence of the purchaser, if desired, at the time of delivery, under a penalty of not exceeding ten dollars for each refusal to do so.

When scales are sent to factories or to adjustors for repairs, they must be reinspected after such repairs are made, but one-half the fees in addition to those of the regular inspection only shall be charged.

NEWFOUNDLAND PENITENTIARY.

Broom Department.

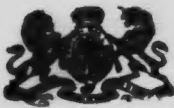
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All orders addressed to the undersigned will receive Prompt Attention.

ALEX. A. PARSONS, Superintendent.

Newfoundland Penitentiary, July, 1912.



Notice to the Public

**"EXTRACT FROM ST. JOHN'S MUNICIPAL
ACT, 1896."**

Section 8.—No person shall light a fire, or cause a fire to be lighted on any street, lane, wharf, public place for any purpose or in yard or in any private residence for the purpose of heating or boiling pitch, tar, sugar, molasses, varnish or such inflammable substances, except in accordance with a permit of the Officer in charge of the Fire Department, under a penalty of ten dollars, to be recovered in a summary manner before a Stipendiary Magistrate or a Justice of the Peace by any person who may sue for the same. In default of payment of said fine the party offending shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one month.

**JOHN SULLIVAN,
Inspector General and
Chief of Fire Department.**

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